

3 1761 06892109 7


JAMES LEACH,

HARDEN,

MR. BINGLEY.

Date

June 12 1906



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Toronto

THE APOSTLES
OF OUR LORD

By the same Author

Third Edition. Crown 8vo, gilt top, 6s.

THE CROSS IN MODERN LIFE

"A volume of really beautiful sermons."—*The Guardian*.

"They are scholarly in treatment, devout in tone, and practical in application."—*The Record*.

"Mr. Greenhough's sermons are everywhere readable, vigorous, cultured, and suggestive, whilst the temper is admirable. They possess, moreover, two qualities that are prominent in the code of present-day requirements—brevity and interest."—*The Christian*.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

THE APOSTLES OF OUR LORD

BY THE REV.

J. G. GREENHOUGH, M.A.

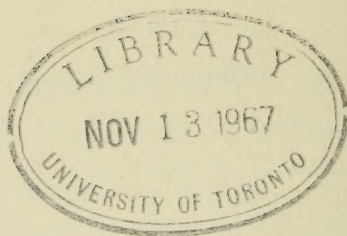
AUTHOR OF "THE CROSS IN MODERN LIFE," ETC.

LONDON

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

27, PATERNOSTER ROW

1904



PREFACE

THE preparation of this book was commenced with the design of furnishing one of a series of small religious text-books or educational manuals. That design was abandoned for several reasons, and not least because the work as it proceeded grew unconsciously beyond the limits of space which had been allowed, and called for some other form of issue. I have ventured therefore with some diffidence to send it forth on its own merits or demerits alone, and not as one of a group. The book is still a comparatively small and entirely unambitious work. It is much too small for the importance of the general subject and the discussion of the manifold auxiliary questions which grow out of the main theme; and the scanty and inadequate treatment of these subsidiary matters demands especially the forbearance of the

reader and perhaps a humble apology to the critic.

The book claims no originality, and, as is more than once stated in the following pages, it makes no pretence to scholarship or research. But I have endeavoured to think my own thoughts and express them in my own way. I have not consulted any similar book in preparing this or deliberately read up for the purpose in any way whatever. Years ago in my student days I read the well-known work of Dr. Bruce on "The Training of the Twelve," and still later, though a long time ago, I perused with profit a smaller work by Rev. J. Edwards, of Marlow, on "These Twelve." It is quite possible that I may have unconsciously used some of their material in building up my own. If so, there is no need to apologise. It is only desirable that my indebtedness should be acknowledged to gifted men who have passed to their reward.

My book is not a collection of sermons, yet many of its thoughts and even expressions have no doubt come to me in the sermon preparation of a long ministry.

In fact, the little volume, though the direct preparation of it has only happily employed the leisure moments of a few months, is really the outcome of indirect study extending over more than half a lifetime.

Every one who spends much thought and time in the Gospel fields gradually shapes a picture of the Master and of His chosen followers, which he carries in his mind, though he may not put it on paper, and which is distinctly his own, and therefore precious to him, though it may have no value to others. That much of originality may perhaps with due modesty be allowed here, otherwise the book must speak for itself. It has cost the writer quite as much labour as it is worth, but it has given him also much enjoyment, far more than it is likely to afford to any one else; yet he sends it out with a prayer that, though it may bring little credit to him, it may suggest a few helpful lessons to minds as simple and comparatively unlearned as his own, but without his years of experience.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

PART FIRST

INTRODUCTORY

CHAP.

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Pre-eminence of Christ in Recent Religious Literature, and Comparative Neglect of the Apostles.
2. The Scantiness of the Material for our Study.
3. Untrustworthiness of Patristic and Early Literature.
4. The Holy Scriptures our Only Source of Information.
5. The Comparative Reticence of the Sacred Writers 3

II. THE ORDAINING OF THE TWELVE

1. Christ's Elect Pupils.
2. Common Clay for the Potter.
3. Typical Men.
4. "Are not these Galilæans?" 15

III. THE ORIGINALITY AND UNIQUENESS OF THEIR CALLING

1. The Purpose in Christ's Mind from the Outset.
2. Our Lord's Singularity in this.
3. Compared with Socrates, Plato, Confucius, Gautama, Mahomet.
4. The Distinguishing Features of Jesus' Calling.
5. His Prophetic Foresight of their Coming Fitness . 26

PART SECOND

*THE RELATIONSHIP AND CHARACTER-
ISTIC FEATURES OF THE TWELVE*

CHAP.	PAGE
IV. ANDREW	
1. First Recruit, First Witness. 2. His Education and Qualifications. 3. Four Appearances. 4. Summary of Andrew	41
V. PETER	
1. First Impressions. 2. Characteristics: (1) The Man of Feeling; (2) The Boldness of Peter; (3) His Self-confidence. 3. The Man of Rock	52
VI. THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE: JAMES AND JOHN	
1. Comrades in Home and Service. 2. Characteristics: "Sons of Thunder." 3. James. 4. John the Beloved. 5. Eagle's Vision	63
VII. PHILIP AND NATHANAEL	
1. Vignettes of Second Quartette. 2. Philip. 3. His First Master and First Recruit. 4. Characteristics. 5. Nathanael. 6. Companion and Counterpart	74
VIII. MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN	
1. The Calling of Levi. 2. Cæsar's Toll-man. 3. What Christ saw in the Publican. 4. Roman Agent, Jewish Patriot	84
IX. THOMAS THE PESSIMIST	
1. Didymus. 2. The Doubter. 3. Christ's Treatment of Doubt. 4. Temperament in Religion. 5. The Heroic Pessimist. 6. "The Sunnier Side of Doubt"	93
X. THE LEAST DISTINGUISHED OF THE APOSTLES	
1. James the Son of Alphæus. 2. A Mother of Apostles. 3. Lebbaeus Thaddæus—Judas not Iscariot. 4. His One Question. 5. Simon the Cananæan. The Zealot	104

CONTENTS

xi

CHAP.

PAGE

XI. JUDAS THE BETRAYER

1. "The Base Judæan." 2. Treasurer to the Twelve. 3. Pleas for the Traitor. 4. The Root of Bitterness 114

PART THIRD

THE TRAINING AND MAKING OF THE APOSTLES

XII. CLEARING THE GROUND

1. Rough Ore. 2. The Refiner. 3. The Personal Spell of the Master. 4. The Revealer of the Heart. 5. Education by Comradeship 127

XIII. UNFOLDING MINDS AND HEARTS

1. Graduated Instruction. 2. Gradual Self-revelation. 3. The Lesson in Sacrifice. 4. Christ's Word not Bound. 5. Laboratory Lessons. 6. His Master-Personality 139

XIV. THE PRUNING AND GRAFTING OF THE DISCIPLES

1. The Master's Own Figure. 2. The Undoing of their Self-conceit. 3. The Imparting of a Nobler Confidence 152

XV. TRANSFORMATION PICTURES

1. The Slow Remaking. 2. Observation of Moral Growth. 3. The Two Miraculous Draughts of Fishes. 4. Increase of Trust in Him. 5. From Loyalty to Love. 6. Enlargement of Views concerning His Person. 7. Growing Tenderness and Love towards each other 166

XVI. THE COMPLETION OF THEIR PREPARATION

1. Illumination from the Cross. 2. The Higher Meaning of the Kingdom. 3. When the Mystery was finished. 4. The Last Touch. 5. The Gift of Fire. 6. The Transformation of the Apostles. 7. The Gospel for all Races 180

PART FOURTH

AFTER-STUDIES

CHAP.

PAGE

XVII. THE LATER LIVES OF THE APOSTLES

1. The Incomplete Acts of the Apostles. 2. James.
3. Peter. 4. John. 5. Apocryphal Stories of other Apostles. 6. The Foundation of the Apostles . . . 195

XVIII. THE SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES

1. The Question of Apostolic Succession. 2. Two Extramural Apostles. 3. Was Twelve the Standing Number? 4. Matthias. 5. Paul. 6. His Evidence on the Question of Apostolical Succession. 7. The Authority of Christ. 8. God's Free Election . . . 209

XIX. THE PRIMACY OF ST. PETER

1. Papal Claims. 2. No Warrant in Scripture.
3. Disproved by the known Character of Peter.
- 4 And by his Place and Position in the Apostolic Church. 5. Our Lord's Words misused. 6. All the Disciples exalted with Peter 221

XX. THE APOSTLE BORN OUT OF DUE TIME

1. Reasons for including Paul. 2. His own Emphatic Claim to Apostleship. 3. His Pre-eminent Fitness. 4. Birthplace and Political Relationships. 5. His Singular Calling and Conversion. 6. His Wider Culture. 7. Influence in the Universal Church 238

XXI. BARNABAS, THE MISSIONARY APOSTLE

1. Pioneer of Foreign Missions. 2. The Man of Goodness 253

XXII. CONCLUDING LESSONS

1. The Disciples the Nucleus of an Innumerable Company. 2. The Possibilities of Faith shown in them. 3. The Completeness of their Surrender to Jesus. 4. The Advantage of their Personal Inter-course. 5. Their Master our Master. 6. Careful Study of the Master still Indispensable. 7. Equipment for Christ's Work. 8. The Christian Life ripened by Patient Discipleship 262

PART FIRST
INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE men whom we are venturing to describe and discuss in the following pages have filled a large place in Christian thought, and have had at sundry times a considerable space assigned to them in Christian literature. Yet though innumerable authors have touched upon their lives and attempted some delineation of their minds and qualities, there have been comparatively few books, at least in modern times, devoted exclusively to this study. There is a significant contrast between the absorbing interest which the Master's mind and doings have aroused, and the scant attention which has been given to the chosen followers. In saying that we are speaking chiefly of recent literature.

1. PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST IN RECENT RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

Lives of Christ have issued from the press in one unceasing flow. They have come from every section of the Church and from every school of religious thought, and still the fascination of the subject draws a perpetual succession of new writers, whose books rarely fail to find a welcome and a host of untiring readers. In the pursuit of this attractive theme the Apostles have been half forgotten or treated only as sidelights and very subordinate accessories of the Great Gospel Figure. Religious thought in its eager devotion has hurried past them to get a clearer and nearer vision of the One Man, who even in exalting them overshadowed them by His supreme greatness. We are far from complaining because they have been put into this comparative neglect. It is as it should be. It is the sweet revenge which Christ has taken for the slights which were put upon Him in those less intelligent ages of the Church, when saint and virgin, mariolatry and adoration of

the Apostles almost crowded Him out (or relegated Him into the distant background of an unapproachable divinity). The Christian thought of to-day has recognised the true proportion of things. It has restored the Master to His supremacy and made Him all in all, and what the great Greek poet wrote of his favourite hero Achilles is felt in a far deeper sense by the modern Church concerning the Lord of the Gospel story and those who were about Him: "He alone is the living Man, and all the rest are shades."

And yet in the very abundance of the literature which has been laid at the Master's feet, and helped us to understand Him, there may be some reason and excuse found for the venture which is made in this unpretentious book. The writer would neither have the daring nor the ability to tread that higher field which so many gifted minds have traversed, and attempt one more portrayal of the Life of lives; but he may with perhaps due modesty undertake the far less ambitious task of expressing his thoughts about the men whom Christ loved and glorified, and he

is tempted to think there may be more room for a work of this kind, because the field has not been lately thronged by other students.

It is not easy to fix our eyes upon any other figures when the figure of the Master is near; they are hidden in the glory of His face, and wherever the disciples are there is Jesus in the midst. And yet they are worth looking at even with this disadvantage, and one who in the course of his Bible studies has walked much with them, and had occasion often to talk about them, finds them stealing a place in his heart, which is not robbed from the Master, and he begins to love them a little as the Master did, and to understand at last, what was somewhat a puzzle to him the beginning, why the Master chose these particular men, and endowed them with the measureless wealth of His untiring devotion. For they are not attractive at first sight; we should have passed them in a crowd without having the eyes arrested for a moment by one distinguishing feature. But they grow upon us as we study them. There is a charm about their honesty, simplicity, and emotional

fervour ; they are men in whom the child is not dead, and in whom the Divine can be easily awakened. They have a great faculty or capacity for wonder, reverence, love, and awe. They are sweetly, pitiably, beautifully, and thoroughly human, appealing to us through every human chord in ourselves. Their plain, unexpressive faces begin to light up as we follow them into intelligence and eloquent meaning, and we learn that in calling them, as in everything else, Jesus had done all things well.

2. THE SCANTINESS OF THE MATERIAL FOR OUR STUDY

We could heartily wish that we had ampler material to work upon in the study of their lives. We are beginning to build, not perhaps without counting the cost, but without adequate store of resources for such a task. We might well describe the Twelve Apostles by the words of St. Paul, "as unknown, yet well known." Well known because they have become such familiar names, and yet

unknown because the greater part of what they did and were is hidden from us. Our possibilities of reading and estimating them are limited to a disappointing degree, and the little that we know is all that we can know until the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. In fact, we are practically indebted to the inspired records for all the authentic information we possess. In one respect this is an unquestionable advantage to an author who makes no pretension to elaborate and careful scholarship, for it saves him from the wearisome toil of endless search in profitless fields. He has only to walk in those sacred fields which are familiar to all, and gather such stray flowers as any simple mind might find. And this book does not profess to be anything more than a study of the New Testament Scriptures.

3. UNTRUSTWORTHINESS OF PATRISTIC AND EARLY LITERATURE

There is a great deal in the comparatively early literature of the Church which bears on

the Apostles, and attempts to fill up the lacunæ which the inspired penmen have left. The same prolific and often puerile imagination which furnished apocryphal gospels and embellished the early years of the Saviour's life with fabulous and even ridiculous stories, employed its romancing pen in fabricating spurious Acts of the Apostles. But these books carry the stamp of forgery or of deplorable ignorance and childish credulity on the face of them. They were formally condemned by Popes and Councils, and they never gained acceptance among the intelligent minds of Christendom. There is a better known and a little more respectable book by an unknown writer or writers of presumably the third century, called *The Apostolic Constitutions*, from which we might learn much concerning the minds of the Apostles, if it had a trustworthy origin. It gives in long detail the directions which the Twelve were supposed to have received from the Master concerning the constitution and appointments of the Church, and the various duties which devolved upon its bishops, deacons, and lay members.

But it savours far too much of later ecclesiasticism to have been suggested or inspired by those who knew the mind of Christ, and it only deserves to be regarded as a literary curiosity, interesting as a revelation of the times in which it appeared, but shedding no light on the subject which we have in hand.

The very early Fathers of the Church, whose evidence would be more acceptable, make not infrequent references to the Apostles; but they tell us very little that is either original or enlightening, and they evidently drew most of their information, if not all, from the same source to which we have to go. Substantially all the help they give is contained in a few floating traditions to which they give the weight of their names, and which will be found woven with some misgiving into our subsequent narrative.

4. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OUR ONLY SOURCE OF INFORMATION

We are flung back then upon the Book which is our one indisputable authority, and to which we make our final appeal in all

things. It is the same limited field to which students of the Divine Life have to confine themselves; for all the knowledge we have of Him, which can be called knowledge, has come from the holy men who preserved and set down His sayings and doings as they were taught and directed by the Spirit of Truth. Outside their writings everything that He did is either lost in silence or distorted by myth. And the men who have shown us Christ have shown us His followers.

5. THE COMPARATIVE RETICENCE OF THE SACRED WRITERS

Yet even on their pages we get only fragmentary details and very partial sketches of the Twelve. It is characteristic of the Bible throughout that it gives no complete biographies. The story of the Christ even, though sufficient for all the purposes of faith, is little more than a fragment of what a reverent curiosity would like to know. There is a virtual blank of thirty years in the record, and we are told nothing, except the

beginnings of the life and the ministry at the end. Still less, as might be expected, is there any fulness of detail given when subordinate figures are introduced into the narrative. The writers of the Bible might almost be compared to clever sketch-makers, who, with a few slight strokes and touches of the pencil, give us the form, features, and very character of a man. There is no deliberate attempt to tell us what the disciples were like and what manner of men they were. There is no careful estimate furnished of their disposition and character. We are simply supplied with a few salient features, a few characteristic incidents, and a few casual sayings which betrayed the speaker's mind; and from these we have to build up our figures from inference and imagination. In the case of the majority of the disciples we have hardly even this much. Concerning none of them is our information great, and concerning some of them it amounts to little more than nothing. It may seem surprising, when we think of the importance which has been assigned to them by the Church and

the equal importance which was given to them by the designation and predictions of their Master Himself, and when we remember the eager curiosity which has at all times followed them, that the sacred writers did not search out and relate more particulars of their lives. But the Bible never lends itself to gratify a curiosity which, however pardonable, serves no moral and spiritual purpose. It may be that the sacred writers did not foresee the interest which these men would awaken in after-times, or that they had no wish to minister to that interest; and what is more likely, and perhaps even certain, they were divinely directed to keep the instruments in the background, and to concentrate the world's thoughts on the Master who used them. That, in fact, is what they have unconsciously or purposely done. They were so eager to give us a full picture of Him that they took no pains to supply the details of those other lives. Nearly all that they do tell us about these men comes out incidentally in their more direct endeavour to present to us the Man. The

recorded sayings and actions of the disciples are just woven into the one matchless story, as illustrative incidents helping us to understand what He was and did ; and everything which would not contribute to that end is almost studiously left out of the narrative.

And the result of all this is that in discussing the men we have to make the most of exceeding slender material.

Yet there is just enough for our purpose. The best known of the disciples—and even some of those less known—gradually take shape in our minds. The little that is told us is singularly well chosen and wonderfully illumining, and the Master Himself throws many a beam of clear light on their faces by the searching questions He asks them, and the answers which He gives to theirs. All men are lighted up when He walks in their presence and talks to them ; and through our knowledge of Him and our frequent converse with Him in the holy fields, we get, in course of years, to be fairly well acquainted with that band of men “ whose hearts the Lord had touched.”

CHAPTER II

THE ORDAINING OF THE TWELVE

“He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach.”—MARK iii. 14.

1. CHRIST’S ELECT PUPILS

THE twelve men whose names are given to us in the context, without comment, as if they were the most ordinary of mortals, have filled the world with their fame. Colleges and cities have been called after them, and churches by the thousand; ships, hospitals, orphanages, and children without number have borne their names. The grandest pieces of architecture have been dedicated to them; the greatest masterpieces of painting have represented their faces. Millions of men and women have superstitiously prayed to them; thousands of books have been written about them; and every Christian child knows their names almost as well as he knows his

own. And yet they were nothing at all in themselves. They were at best obscure, unnoticeable, and very average persons until He took them in hand. He breathed on them and made them illustrious—as Whittier says,

They touched His garment's fold, and soon
The Heavenly Alchemist transformed their very dust to gold.

The teaching and preparing of these men was one of the great purposes of His ministry. At the first glance we are surprised that He should have devoted so much of His time and thought to this one end. He who came to save a world spent a large proportion of His strength in saving just twelve men. They got the cream of His thoughts, the best of His energy, and the most of His time. As a mother gives what we call "the lion's share" of her thought, strength, and devotion to her own children, so Jesus gave His largest and best to these twelve. They received directly more than half His teachings. They monopolised the greater portion of His tender care and watchfulness. We might have supposed, if we had not known Him better, that He put

a greater value upon these dozen lives than upon all the rest of the human family. It seemed altogether disproportionate, when a whole world was calling to Him and perishing for want of Him, to lavish so much on that mere handful. But the far-seeing wisdom of our Lord was manifest in this as in all other things. He knew that through these twelve He would most surely reach the world. These twelve lights would speedily multiply themselves if properly kindled. If they were thoroughly set on fire, the fire would spread. A few men charged with His spirit, fully illumined with His doctrine, ready to dare anything, and go anywhere at His bidding, would do more than ten thousand of the feebler and less devoted sort. The way to spread God's kingdom is, not to give a multitude or a nation a whitewash of religion, but to make a few all alive with it, and ready to die for it. Quality goes further than quantity in saving work. The great thing is to make Christians who will make a multitude of other Christians, who will both carry the good seed in themselves and scatter it.

Jesus began the world's salvation by training twelve Christ-like men, and the whole Christian world acknowledges now that it was the wise and Divine way.

2. COMMON CLAY FOR THE POTTER

It was poor material to the outward eye which Christ chose to fashion into His witnesses and mighty workmen. What were these twelve men when He took them in hand—these men who became the pioneers, leaders and builders of an everlasting society, and carried forward to a certain stage the grandest work which the world has seen done? We hardly know what word would fairly and truthfully describe them. It would certainly be no very eulogistic word. "Ordinary clay" would not be far from the mark. We might safely say "commonplace." If there was anything extraordinary, it was visible to His eyes alone. They were men of the people, plebeian, if not vulgar; for the most part peasants, country people, rude villagers, provincial townsmen, or rough

toilers of the sea. Two or three of them, like Levi, had probably received a little more than the average education ; the rest hardly that. Most of them earned their livelihood by common handicrafts. They had had little leisure for self-culture and thought. They were evidently respectable men from the moral point of view. They had lived, so far as we know, sober, honest lives, with a religious bent, and had borne a reputable character. They had been interested in the religious movements and discussions of the time, and knew something about the favourite doctrines and sayings of the various religious schools, and they had shared to the full that expectation of the early coming of the Messiah which was agitating the most earnest minds. But there was nothing in all that which gave the slightest indication of exceptional qualities or fitness for distinguished service. We watch them as they journey about with Jesus ; we hear their talk, disputes, and questions. For a long time there does not appear to be anything particularly bright and promising. No one would call them

clever, smart, or gifted men. Not a spark of genius flashes out, not a glimmer of superior wisdom, or the smallest sign of original force. If it were a question of talents, we should be disposed to credit them with one rather than with two or five or ten. They do a little thinking, but they are woefully ignorant, and their thinking is often foolish. They are willing to be taught, but they are deeply rooted in prejudice; and they often say things so childish that we are half ashamed of them, and marvel that their Teacher could be so patient. They are not very courageous. Occasionally they are brave for a few moments, but a little thing fills them with dread, and we should hardly expect them to develop into heroes. They all have faults of temper and petty weaknesses. Some of them are vain and consequential, and occasionally they are quarrelsome through envy and jealousy of each other. Not great men these, by any means! Not the sort of men whom we should send into the ministry or to Parliament, or send anywhere if we wished to have places well filled and

important work done. It would hardly be overstating the case if we were to say that there are twelve young men in nearly every large Christian congregation who, in qualities of mind and adaptation for work, are at least equal to these twelve when Jesus called them. And what His power and spirit and training made of them every one knows—twelve of the strongest, noblest, most fearless and serviceable men that have appeared in human history. The transformation of the Twelve was not the least, it was almost the greatest, of His miracles.

3. TYPICAL MEN

There is one thing further which impresses us at the outset—that the men whom Christ selected were distinguished in a marked degree by differences and varieties of temper and disposition. They were twelve *men*, not twelve copies, not twelve imitative machines, not twelve plaster figures taken out of the same mould. Not one of the disciples reminds us of any other. The faces are all distinct, and

the characters are all distinct. Peter is forward and self-assertive; Andrew keeps in the background and is never obtrusive. James is like a volcano; Nathanael rather like a quiet summer pool. Some, like John, are always leaning on the Master and trustfully following; others are trying to push Him on, and sometimes going first. Philip always looks before he leaps; Peter leaps before he looks. Thomas desponds and doubts, and is slow to believe any good thing; others believe all things without a question. Some are born to lead; others are content to be led. The varieties, and even contrasts, are most striking. They were not only twelve men, but twelve types. Our Lord chose them purposely for this. The whole human race was represented in that narrow circle. For humanity has no great variety of types. There are innumerable differences among men, but only a small number of types. No man is like his neighbour, but every man belongs to one or other of about a dozen classes. The people of a village are substantially the people of a town. The people of one nation

are much the same in their deeper qualities as the people of another nation, and the men of one century the same as the men of another century. There are just a few distinct varieties of temper, disposition, and character; and wherever we go, under any sky, we find them again. In these twelve Jesus had the whole human family. He was experimenting on the entire race. If He could bring these twelve under His power and subdue them to His qualities, it was a proof that all men might be made to yield to Him. It was a prophetic demonstration that His salvation was adapted to all classes and conditions.

It was a proof, moreover, that He was both able and willing to employ all manner of gifts and all manner of natures in His service. If we had been entrusted with the choice of these men, we should have left several of them out. The modest Andrew, the melancholy Thomas, the hesitating Philip, would probably have been passed over. Jesus had room for them all and work for all. Their names all appear on the foundation-stones of

the New Jerusalem. They had all an essential part in building that city. Despise no man's gifts, and let no man despise his own. Jesus proved that all gifts, small and great, can be divinely used, and even made mighty, by the calling of these twelve.

4. "ARE NOT THESE GALILÆANS?"

We shall see, moreover, that Jesus did not go to the most cultured and highly civilised places for His disciples. With perhaps one exception, they were called from the towns and villages of Galilee, a province which was looked upon by the people of Jerusalem and Judæa as old-fashioned, narrowly provincial, and unpolished. The one exception was Judas Iscariot, who came from the southern country; and the unhappy result of that man's calling helped to show the Master's wise foresight in selecting His material from Galilee. The men of Judæa had perhaps more refinement and a little more educational equipment, but they were more rigidly conservative in religious matters than the men

of the north—they were wedded to rabbinical traditions and the priestly system. They were obstinately proud, and their hearts and minds were closed against new ideas. The men whom Jesus chose were better fitted for His training, because less wise in their own conceit, and therefore more teachable.

Perhaps it should also be remembered that though the Galilæans, of the towns at least, were deficient in that somewhat superficial culture on which the southern Jews prided themselves, they were quite as intelligent and mentally alert. Their cities were all alive with commercial activities. They were in closer contact with the Gentile world, and had not escaped the influence of foreign thought. They were more open to new ideas than their Judæan brethren, and, though lacking in the education of the schools, they had received that rougher but more practical education which adapted them in larger measure to the purpose and training of the Master.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGINALITY AND UNIQUENESS OF THEIR CALLING

1. THE PURPOSE IN CHRIST'S MIND FROM THE OUTSET

THE calling and equipment of the disciples was an original thought of Jesus. We do not know how much of His work He had shaped out before it was begun, or to what extent He foresaw the whole path as it stretched before Him ; but this part of it was in His mind from the outset. It did not arise as an after-thought ; it did not grow from a vague wish into a definite purpose. He brought it fully formed into His ministry. Indeed, He began to summon around Him His chosen band before His ministry had well commenced ; whilst as yet there had been no miracle wrought, and none of His

distinctive teachings given. Other men have made a name for themselves first, and then through their proved power and wisdom have unconsciously attracted to themselves disciples. Jesus enlisted His disciples in the very initial stage in order that, as Peter said, "they might company Him all the time that He went in and out among them," that they might have the benefit of all which He taught and did, and be trustworthy witnesses of the whole sacred drama.

2. OUR LORD'S SINGULARITY IN THIS

In much of this our Lord stands alone. He followed no models, and He has had no imitators. His relationship to the disciples and theirs to Him, and the great part which He assigned to them in the upbuilding of the new kingdom even before they had given any indication of fitness, are quite unique. There was nothing singular in the fact that He made disciples. His immediate predecessor, John the Baptist, had done that, as it has been done indeed by all the notable sages and thinkers in the world's history. Every

man who either is or thinks himself in possession of great truths feels impelled to communicate them to others. "A man's thoughts," says Herbert Spencer, "are like children born to him which he cannot willingly let die"; or as it was more forcibly expressed by a Hebrew prophet, "The word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." The true teacher teaches as a matter of necessity, and slowly he gathers around him a few receptive and admiring minds willing to be taught. And so every moral and intellectual leader, every pioneer of new religious ideas, gains a following of disciples. But nowhere else do we find those distinctive features which make the story of the Twelve so memorable, and their appointment so deliberate, so carefully foreordained, and in the result so momentous.

3. COMPARISONS WITH OTHER GREAT TEACHERS

Socrates had a few devoted and even enthusiastic pupils, who followed him everywhere and hung upon his lips; but he never called them

his disciples, or attempted to attach them to his person. They clung to him uninvited, and in his discourses he made no distinction between them and the crowd. His homely wisdom was offered freely and impartially in street and market-place to every one who cared to listen. There grew up around him, and in his steps after he was gone, what has been called the Socratic School—men who had caught his method, and who expanded his teaching. But it was through no design or forethought of the master. Plato drew a select company of thoughtful and earnest students, whose minds were wholly shaped by his marvellous intellectual displays; but the cultured gentlemen's sons who thronged his academy and rewarded him with handsome fees were as far removed as possible from the twelve obscure men whom Jesus set apart. Plato was the prince of schoolmasters, and no more; and he was very fastidious in the choice of pupils, for over his door, if common report may be believed, was a warning notice forbidding entrance to all except the educated. And Plato had far too much proud disdain of

the common people to think, as Jesus did, that his teaching could be conveyed to them through the instrumentality of chosen disciples.

Much the same may be said of Confucius, the Chinese sage. His leanings were towards the wise, the noble, and the mighty, and he had no great respect for the weak, the foolish and despised. He preferred to seek and make disciples in high quarters among the sons of noble and influential families, and with slow and stupid scholars he often declared that he would have nothing to do. It would be impossible to imagine a greater contrast than between his thoughts and methods and our Lord's patient and unwearying training of His unpromising and illiterate band.

Gautama, the supposed founder of the Buddhist faith, came perhaps nearest to Jesus in his teaching and employment of disciples. Yet they were made rather by force of events than design. He did not call and appoint them until they had gradually grown into his teaching, and virtually appointed themselves by adhering to him, and sharing his journeys

and privations. Gautama, like our Lord, and unlike Confucius and Plato, showed no preference or favour towards the rich and the learned. His thoughts on the great problems of life were communicated to all freely and indiscriminately, even to the poorest and the most ignorant who were willing to receive them. And he imparted to every one who fully accepted his doctrine a missionary and converting purpose. They were all required to labour in spreading the teaching and making disciples of others. But so far as can be learned, there was no inner circle of disciples within the larger and more loosely attached company. There was no deliberate design to separate a select few and thoroughly imbue them with the master's spirit, and confer upon them special training, gifts, and powers for a distinctive and peculiar work.

Finally, Mahomet had no such far-seeing design as Jesus, nor did he begin by enlisting the type of men whom Jesus sought. There was more policy than spiritual insight in his making of disciples. He was ambitious to secure influential relatives and powerful

allies, who would bring weight and prestige to his side. There was little of that confidence in himself and that disregard of worldly help which made Jesus pass by the rulers and great people, and fix His choice on men who could bring to Him nothing in the way of secular support.

4. THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF JESUS' CALLING

In many of these features and incidents the story of Jesus and His appointed twelve is a story of its own kind only once told, coloured with a certain Divine romance, and instinct with the marks of a peculiar Divine power. There was a predestination in His choice of them with which they had little or nothing to do. As He told them afterwards, they did not choose Him, but He chose them. He set His love upon them and His secret mark of ownership when they hardly knew Him at all, and, in some cases, when they had not spoken to Him previously. They did not become disciples by sitting at His feet

and growing into His thoughts. He made them disciples before His wisdom had in any degree impressed them. They were found of Him whom they sought not; they were quite unmade, they had everything to learn; they could not even have explained why they went after Him. He simply drew them, and they followed, not knowing why or whither. It was like the imperial, irresistible Voice which came to Abraham: "Get thee out, into a land which I will show thee." "And he went out, not knowing whither he went."

We read in one place that Jesus knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for He knew what was in man. That partly explains the calling and the making of the Apostles. He knew what was in them; He read them as we read a book, but with far more understanding. He knew them incomparably better than they knew themselves. He saw their hidden weaknesses and their incipient elements of strength. There was abundance of chaff with the scanty grains of wheat which would need much

winnowing; but He was equal to the task. The germs of promise were there, and in time would yield the perfect fruit. He believed in the men, and, what was more, He had absolute confidence in His own power to make them what He wished. They might have truly said, in the words of St. Paul, "He foreknew and predestinated us to be conformed to His own image, and whom He predestinated He called, and whom He called He justified." He justified particularly His own foresight, wisdom, and elective choice.

5. HIS PROPHEPIC FORESIGHT OF THEIR COMING FITNESS

Throughout His training of them, even at the very beginning, when they were still in the crude and rude stage of their formation, only just touched by the Sculptor's chisel, He imputes to them a certain grandeur, and sees in them a certain moral glory, which was all to come, and of which they had, up to that point, given no sign. His language concerning them sounds extravagant until

the after-facts vindicate it. It was to these men primarily that He said, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world." The words were intended indirectly to describe His disciples through all the ages, but He had immediately in mind the Twelve, and the saying is stupendous. The omniscience and omnipotence of God could hardly make a loftier and more confident assertion than that. "The salt and light of the world"! How apparently preposterous to speak of these men in such ambitious terms as light-givers and regenerators to the whole world!—men who had not yet been touched with regeneration themselves; in whose minds the light was hardly kindled, or, at best, was only flickering as a smoking taper in a mass of darkening prejudices. It would have been laughable if any other lips had said the word. But with Him it was the sublime confidence of One who had set Himself to transform and re-create these men, and whose purpose would not fail. All His talk about their future was toned with the same bold and triumphant certainty. He saw them not

as they were, but as they would be when they had passed through His school and yielded fully to His moulding Spirit. In His unerring prevision they appeared as the masters of human thought and the leaders of the human race. They were to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My tribulation, and I have appointed unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed Me." They were to win such command and influence, and even love, that it would be as if friends and brethren, and wives and children, and houses and lands were multiplied to them a hundredfold. They were to be so endued with strength that their very weakness would become a rock, against which the gates of hell would not prevail ; and they were to be gifted with such clear spiritual discernment that the sins which they retained and the sins which they remitted would be so acknowledged and confirmed in heaven. Much of it was figurative language, but the interpretation of it could hardly be misunderstood. These

men were to grow into the shape and magnitude which He designed. He was to image and reproduce Himself in their minds and lives. He was to triumph over their unfitness by making them great in spite of themselves. That purpose was in His mind when He called them, and even before He had called them, and He steadfastly pursued it without wavering or shadow of doubt until it was accomplished. And all this makes the uniqueness and originality of His appointment and equipment of the Twelve.

PART SECOND

*THE RELATIONSHIP AND CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF
THE TWELVE*

CHAPTER IV

THE QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE TWELVE

It is desirable at this stage to attempt some meagre study of the material which the Master undertook to deal with, and shape as the clay is shaped by the potter. The Gospels give us no detailed descriptions of the disciples. There is nothing in the nature of biographies. We have only incidental allusions. We have to watch the men as they appear at intervals in the panoramic scenes of Christ's ministry, and hear what they say and what He says to them. They are always subordinate actors in the drama, and some of them are continually in the background, hardly making their voices heard at all. Still it is possible, by gathering up the minor parts which they played and interpreting the unconscious revelations of themselves, to draw

a fairly correct though very incomplete picture of the men as Christ found and knew them. And this we propose to do in the following chapters, commencing with

1. THE FIRST RECRUIT, FIRST WITNESS

Andrew and John were the first of the Twelve who heard and responded to the Master's call, the first whom He enlisted in His little cohort of disciples. They had previously been followers of John the Baptist, and had been taught by him to look for the speedy coming of the Messiah. One day, as Jesus passed by, their master John pointed to Him and announced Him as "the Lamb of God." They looked into His face, felt some powerful attraction drawing them to Him, and without an invitation they followed and abode with Him one day. What Jesus said to them that day is not recorded, but it removed every doubt from their minds, if any doubt had lingered. It was a day of revelation and of grace, the most eventful day of their lives, for they had found the Saviour

who was to make their lives and all things new.

Then followed the simple and touching incident of Andrew's first Christian witness-bearing. No sooner had he made his great discovery than he burned to impart the secret to others ; and what better place could he find for that purpose than his own home ? He and his brother, Simon, had grown up together, shared each other's thoughts, and doubtless talked often together about the coming of the Messiah. It was right that this brother should be the first to learn the glad tidings. He went in search of him at once, and said, " Brother, I have found the Christ," and " he brought him to Jesus " ; and from that hour they trod the higher path together. That was the beginning of their discipleship, as we have it recorded by an eye-witness, St. John. But we learn from the other evangelists that their decisive calling and separation for the work did not take place until a subsequent period. They still continued to follow their fishermen's trade, and had not yet learned that Christ's service

would require from them abandonment of all things. That lesson was given to them on a memorable occasion. We learn from St. Matthew (iv. 18-20), with fuller particulars from St. Luke (v. 4-9), that Andrew and his brother had been fishing all night in vain. Jesus commanded them to cast their net once more. They obeyed, though with some hesitation, and with little hope of results. Straightway their ship was overladen with the draught of fishes which they took, and their hearts were still more oppressed with a great fear of Him who had done this miracle. The Saviour dispersed their dread by a few cheering words, and by a promise to make them fishers of men. And from that hour they left their ship and home and all things, and followed Him. The decisive hour had come, and they had made the great surrender.

The little that is known of Andrew's previous life belongs equally to the story of Peter. Their names, Andreas and Simon, are Greek; and it has been supposed from that there was a trace of Hellenistic blood in them, derived perhaps from the mother's side. Of

the mother nothing is recorded. The father's name was Jonas, or, as he is once called, Jona. They belonged originally to Bethsaida, but were living at the time of their calling at Capernaum. The two families of Zebedee and Jonas were partners in the fishing business, and were evidently in possession of a small fleet of boats, and fairly prosperous. The stress which is several times in the course of the narrative laid upon their leaving *all* implies that there was something not inconsiderable to leave.

2. HIS EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

It may also be inferred from this that their education had not been entirely neglected. The notion that they were rough and uncultured men has no foundation save in the scornful saying of the priests concerning Peter and John, that they were "ignorant and unlearned," a saying which the priests were ready to apply to most men who did not belong to their class. It is probable that the two brothers had received such schooling

as was given to the children of middle-class Galilæans, and were at least fairly well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. And it is almost certain that they had been trained in a religious home, with regular attendance at the synagogue. It is quite as evident that they were men of a thoughtful disposition, who had been accustomed to ponder over the great questions of God and life, and that the bent of their minds was towards serious and religious things.

Andrew does not play a conspicuous part in the Gospel drama. We know him better than some of the other disciples, such as Bartholomew and Jude, but not nearly so well as Peter and John. He is one of the subordinate characters, stepping on the stage here and there to do a bit of modest work, and then vanishing again into the background. He does not appear to have had any particular gifts. He was not an eloquent preacher. He wrote no epistles, wrought no miracles, and founded no churches, so far as we know. He had none of the holy audacity of Peter, nor did he attain to the literary

skill of Matthew or the inspired imagination of John. He was never in the foreground or regarded as a leader. We know him chiefly as the brother of Simon Peter. He is almost overshadowed by the superior energy and ability of his kinsman and of James and John. These three were the pillars of the Church, while he was but one of its humbler stones ; yet the few things recorded of him are invested with a fadeless beauty, and they speak to ordinary Christians with almost more force in the way of example than the inimitable doings of his greater fellow Apostles. Andrew was the man of slender powers, but willing and devoted purpose, who used his powers sweetly and nobly ; and in *all* this shows us the way we ought to go, and the sort of work which we can do.

3. FOUR APPEARANCES

He is introduced in the evangelic narrative on just four occasions, setting aside those times when his name is simply mentioned in the list of disciples.

The first occasion has been already referred to, when he found his brother and helped to make a convert of him. It was the work which lay nearest, and his feet hastened to accomplish it. On another occasion we read that in conjunction with Philip he introduced certain Greeks to the Saviour—Greeks, or perhaps foreign-born Jews, who had come up to the feast. Andrew brought them to Jesus, and was thus the means of conveying the truth to the first batch of inquirers from the great pagan world (John xii. 21, 22).

The third occasion, intermediate between these two, was in connection with the miraculous feeding of the multitude (John vi. 8, 9). The disciples were in despair as to what should be done with the great hungry crowd in the desert, where there was no bread to be had and no money to pay for it if it had been procurable. While they were crying out "Impossible!" Andrew's practical mind seized upon the little that was possible. He found a lad with a few loaves and small fishes, and brought him to Jesus. At least it was better to give a

mouthful of food to a dozen famishing men than to send the whole company empty away. Andrew was the man who always found his work waiting for him, and did not waste his time in sighing for imaginary work on a larger scale. His eyes were not in the ends of the earth or in the clouds, but in the service and duty, however insignificant, which presented itself in his daily walk. He was the type of man who does with all his might whatsoever his hand finds to do, and does not despise the humble opportunity in straining after some more ambitious opening that may never come. By such men is the kingdom of God built up.

Moreover, Andrew is continually bringing men to Jesus—not three thousand at once, as Peter brought them, but individually, singly, or at most one or two together. He is the man who preaches to a single hearer because he has not the gift of haranguing a crowd. It was that sort of preaching mainly which brought about the extension of the early Church. A man who believed told his brother, friend, and neighbour. Each

illumined soul set fire to another. Each convert was as good as two, for each one made a second. And thus the good seed of the kingdom is mainly spread now.

The fourth occasion on which we meet with Andrew is when he comes along with Peter, James, and John to ask Jesus privately the meaning of certain times and predictions: from which we may infer that he was regarded as one of the more privileged of the company whom our Lord had admitted to closer confidence and intimacy, and, in fact, his introduction of the Greeks to Jesus at the request of Philip, who evidently dared not venture to do it alone or himself, points to the same conclusion. He was one of the inner circle of the disciples, though not of the innermost. Not quite so privileged as the three, Peter, James, and John, who were allowed to see the Master's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, and who were taken apart to watch with Him in Gethsemane. But he was probably one of the four whom Jesus loved and trusted most.

4. ANDREW SUMMARISED

And we may describe him in brief as a true, brave, humble, self-forgetting soul, loyal and ever ready at the word of command, content to fill a little place, and free from self-seeking ambitions. He had a great stock of honest simplicity and homely serviceableness, with no touch either of the blundering or the soaring which genius and cleverness bring. He attempted no great things, and never felt himself capable of them. But he recognised the minor duties and humbler possibilities which superior minds are apt to overlook. He was ever faithful in that which was least, and never lost an opportunity of rendering needed service and bearing witness. And, above all things, he was devoted heart and soul to the Master whose call had found him.

We may say of men like Andrew, in the Lord's own words, "of such is the kingdom"; and it is not unlikely that the Lord was thinking of him when He spoke those warning words to the somewhat vainglorious Peter, "Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

CHAPTER V

PETER

1. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

OF the Twelve whom Jesus trained, Peter is by far the most striking figure. He interests us most, partly because we know him best, but chiefly because of the dramatic surprises which he is always preparing for us. He often says and does unwise and even foolish things, more often than otherwise; but he is so thoroughly honest that we readily forgive him; and the freshness, frankness, and originality of the man invest his very blunders with a certain charm. He is, with the exception of the Master, the most prominent personage in the Gospel narrative. Peter is not one of those men who, like Andrew, naturally and invariably take a back seat. He is very much in evidence, and never

allows us to forget him very long. For he is always stepping forward to do or say something that arrests attention. We see him in all sorts of places and in manifold attitudes, and we seem to know him nearly as well as if we had his portrait. He was not the best of the Twelve, either in spiritual or intellectual quality. There were some others in whom the Master saw a clearer reflection of Himself. But he is the one whom we follow with most sympathy, and the one whom, in a certain sense, we like best. We smile gently at his follies; we have a kindly pity for him when he falls. He is thoroughly human—"not too good for human nature's daily food." Peter is a comforting man to read about, because he reminds us so much of the failings in ourselves; and we instinctively think, if Christ could make something great of this imperfect mortal—make a strong, fearless, mighty Apostle of this combination of iron and clay, fire and water—there is both encouragement and hope for us.

We have already, in speaking of Andrew, referred to all that is known of Peter's earlier

life. We may presume that he was the elder of the two brothers. It was in his house that Andrew resided, and he is presented to us as a married man—the only one of the Twelve of whom that little incident is distinctly recorded. It is by no means certain that all the rest were unmarried, but it is probable that Christ purposely selected young men free from these obligations, that they might be more entirely at His service. Peter may have been made an exception, if he was an exception, because of his character and fitness for leadership; for Jesus at their first interview discerned in him certain hidden qualities which would develop into that fitness. He uttered a prediction then which anticipated the new name that was to be afterwards given him: “Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas (or Peter), which is, by interpretation, A stone” (John i. 42). In the Gospel story he is for a time called by the old name, then by the two together, and finally the new name only is used, Peter, by which he lives in our thoughts and in the memory of the whole Church.

2. CHARACTERISTICS

Our earliest insight into his character is given in the scene which preceded his second and decisive call. The miraculous draught of fishes and the proof which it furnished of Christ's superhuman knowledge and power filled him with amazement, and brought him to his knees in self-abasement and terror. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man," he cried. He reveals himself to us at once there as an impressionable and impulsive nature, swayed completely by the passing mood, and with feelings that are easily and deeply moved. He speaks what is in him, without a moment's thought or hesitation. He has a sensitive conscience, which forces him promptly to a confession of guilt. For it is not to be supposed that he had been a greater sinner than the rest because he flung out this cry. It was because he felt more quickly what they all felt in time, that the presence and words and actions of Jesus showed them their own darkness as they had never seen it before. And finally the man

is presented to us here as a religious nature, with a large element of almost pagan superstition. He has seen an exhibition of divine power; and at once, with his semi-pagan mind, he associates it with wrath, and wishes to escape from it. He has much to learn yet, and the best thing of all which he has to learn is that divine power goes with perfect divine love. The features which appear in this first view of him reappear more or less at every stage of his training.

(1) *The Man of Feeling*

First, he was a man in whom feeling and passion and impulse were strong. He was excitable and sympathetic. The thought of his Master's coming sufferings and rejections filled him with indignation and pain (Matt. xvi. 22). The peril and insults to which his Master was exposed made him boil over with uncontrollable wrath (John xviii. 10). His emotions, whether they were of love, fear, pity, or anger, always carried him away. He never thought long enough to curb impulse

by judgment, and to restrain action by wise calculation of consequences. His heart was in the right place; his motives were always generous: what he needed was a little more patience and self-distrust, and much more wise self-restraint; and these qualities he slowly acquired under the Master's teaching.

(2) *The Boldness of Peter*

A second feature was his unmistakable courage. No one who rightly understands human nature will question his courage because of his temporary lapse into panic and cowardice. The bravest men are subject to these moods. The most valiant soldiers disgrace themselves at times by their unaccountable collapses. Frederick the Great ran away ignominiously from his first battle. Elijah and John the Baptist were undoubted heroes; but the heart of one failed in the desert, and the heart of the other in his prison. Peter was essentially a brave man. His walking on the sea was a rash act, but only a brave man would have even attempted

it. His taking the sword in defence of his Master was an unwise proceeding, but only a fearless man would have stood up alone against a company of soldiers. When he declared, "I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death," he meant it; and if the trial had come at that moment, he would have gone. There was real courage mixed with softer material. It needed to be disciplined, tried by fire, purified, and strengthened by a higher spirit of trust and devotion to become rock-like, as it did become, and as Jesus knew it would become.

(3) *His Self-confidence*

A third characteristic was the self-conceit of the man. He was strangely blind both to his own ignorance and to his own weaknesses. He overrated his strength and knowledge and ability, often unduly estimated his own courage, and generally valued a little too highly his own importance. All this made him venture when he should rather have drawn back—made him utter magnificent

vows and promises which he afterwards shamefully broke—made him sometimes presumptuously rebuke and correct his Master when a little more knowledge and modesty would have kept him silent, and tempted him to rely upon himself when he should have been simply trusting and depending upon the Lord. All this had to be driven out of him by painful trials and sad failures. He was to learn modesty through suffering, yet the very defect had its promising side. He who never attempts *more* than he can do never accomplishes what he might do. He who distrusts his powers too much is far weaker in life's battle than he who overestimates them. And the very self-confidence which betrayed Peter into rash ventures and made him too forward was the element which helped to produce the coming leader.

3. THE MAN OF ROCK

It is evident that by these and other qualities he pushed himself into, or was allowed to take, a prominent position among

the disciples. He made no claim to leadership—that is never mentioned in the Gospel records; and indeed it would have been both unbecoming and impossible in the presence of Him who was the only Leader and Master: but he came to be tacitly acknowledged as the strongest man of the company. It was not without provoking envy, and some measure of opposition. We read more than once of disputes which took place among the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest (Matt. xviii. 1; Mark ix. 34); and we are told that the two sons of Zebedee, probably jealous of Peter's forwardness, were ambitious to secure the uppermost place of influence for themselves (Mark x. 37). Peter's force of character, however, his readiness of speech, his boldness and promptness in action, placed him in front, and after a time that unclaimed seniority or premier-ship was recognised by them all. In every one of the lists of the disciples which the evangelists give us Peter's name appears first. In the most solemn scenes and manifestations of the Saviour's life, such as the

Transfiguration scene and that in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter and two others are the favoured ones who are permitted to accompany Him and witness His glory or His sorrow—and here also Peter is named first. And when Christ appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, it was to Peter that He gave a sort of charge or shepherd's place over his brethren (John xxi. 17). All through the Gospel narrative he appears as spokesman of the disciples, asking the questions which they felt, but hesitated to express; giving the answers and making the confessions which were in their minds, but which they had not courage or decision to utter. It is Peter who asks Jesus the question about the tribute money (Matt. xvii. 24), and the questions about the meaning of His parables (Luke xii. 41), and the question how many times a brother should be forgiven (Matt. xviii. 21), and the question as to what reward they should have who had left all and followed Him (Matt. xix. 27). It is Peter who makes the first great confession of Christ's Messiahship (Matt. xvi. 16), and

Peter again who speaks for all the rest when Jesus says, "Will ye also go away?" "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John vi. 68). And it is Peter who, at the washing of the feet, speaks out the reluctance which is in all their minds (John xiii. 6). He keeps this forward position to the last, even in the vehemence of his protestations and oaths of continued fidelity. He is the loudest in his promises; and, alas! with the exception of Judas, the first to fall. That terrible fall was indeed a revelation of his weakness, but it did not forfeit for him the influence which he had gained. It was a needed humbling; he came out of it not only forgiven, but strengthened, and with a true knowledge of himself. After our Lord's ascension he at once steps into the post which requires great boldness and courage. He is Peter the rock, defying priests and rulers. He is one of the pillars around which the disciples gather. "Out of weakness" he has been "made strong." What followed belongs to the later story, which need not be dwelt on at this stage.

CHAPTER VI

THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE: JAMES AND JOHN

1. COMRADES IN HOME AND SERVICE

ACCORDING to St. Luke's account (v. 11), which may be regarded as a more complete record of the same incident given by St. Matthew (iv. 18-22), four disciples received their call and made the great surrender in the same hour. They were all fishermen, and closely associated with each other by partnership in business, by ties of long friendship, and by kinship; and they were the first to be summoned to the service. They are always placed first in the enumeration of the Twelve. They seem to have retained throughout a sort of priority, and composed what may be called "the inner circle" of Christ's little company. Andrew and Peter have been already noticed; the other two

come in naturally for our next consideration. They are introduced to us, and generally described, as James and John, the sons of Zebedee; their mother's name, as may be inferred from comparing Matt. xxvii. 56 with Mark xv. 40, was Salome. It has been supposed, though on somewhat slender grounds, that she was sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus; and in that case the two disciples would be first cousins of our Lord.

Zebedee was evidently a man of substance, for he had ships and hired servants (Mark i. 20). He appears once in the Gospel narrative, on the occasion when his sons left him to follow Jesus, and never again. Either he died shortly after they had entered on their discipleship, or, what is more probable, he did not share their thoughts and sympathies, their faith in Jesus, and did not approve the life which they had chosen. It is not unlikely that our Lord had him and his opposition in mind when he spoke about forsaking father and mother for His sake (Matt. x. 37, xix. 29).

On the other hand, the mother of Zebedee's

children was heart and soul with them in the decision which they had made. She was one of the first to believe in Jesus. She believed thoroughly in His coming kingship (Matt. xx. 20). She encouraged her sons in their devotion to Him. She was one of the women who ministered to Him of their substance. She followed Him to Jerusalem when He took His last journey. She was one of the sympathetic and sorrowing women who were witnesses of His final sufferings and who came to anoint His body on the morning of the Resurrection (Mark xv. 40, xvi. 1). She was evidently a brave, true woman, willing, like her sons, to give up all things for Christ, and the worthy mother of worthy children.

In the main part of the Gospel story James and John are spoken of together, always in that order, from which we may infer that James was the elder brother. But it is also manifest that for a time he took precedence of his brother by energy of character and some measure of self-assertiveness. But this did not continue. At first we read of John

as the brother of James; afterwards it is James who is spoken of as the brother of John. The quieter and perhaps deeper force of the younger man gradually discovered itself, and they had changed places.

2. CHARACTERISTICS: "SONS OF THUNDER"

The fact that they are always represented as acting and speaking together may possibly have led us to do a little injustice to him whom we know as "the beloved disciple." On two memorable occasions they made requests, hereafter referred to, which seem much more consistent with what we know of James than with what is afterwards recorded of John; and we can easily imagine that the elder brother was the spokesman, and that the other, yielding to his influence, gave approval by his silence.

Yet it has to be remembered that Jesus made no distinction when He called them "sons of thunder." They were men who felt strongly. Their faith in Jesus was of the most unquestioning kind, their devotion

to Him impassioned, and their zeal in His cause had that fierce, determined, and fiery intensity which, if not restrained by a gentle spirit of wise consideration and charity, makes the cruel bigot and relentless persecutor.

This feature in their temper and character comes out with sharp emphasis in two incidents recorded by St. Luke (ix. 49, 50, and 54, 55). They had met with some unknown person who was using the name of Christ to cast out devils—who was evidently a believer in Christ, and desirous of bearing witness, but who did not belong to the disciples' company. They had rebuked this man with unnecessary sternness, on the ground that he was not wholly with them; and our Lord chided their hasty intolerance, laying down a principle which has a wide application at all times: "He that is not against us is for us." Every one who was trying to do healing and saving work in the name of Christ was to be regarded as a disciple and ally. A little later on the two brothers displayed their pushful vehemence and want of sweet reasonableness in their

cruel demand that Jesus should call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village which was unwilling to receive Him. Again He rebuked them in severe language, reminding them that the spirit of Elijah was not the spirit of the Gospel, and that His purpose was not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. It is manifest that they believed at this stage of their training, probably with all the disciples, that our Lord intended to set up a visible temporal kingdom, and that He would eventually establish it by force; and in the fierce impetuosity of their own nature they were anxious to push Him on to forceful methods.

Their conception of His kingdom, together with another quality which distinguished them at this time, appears in the ambitious request which they made on a subsequent occasion, that He would promote them to the two highest places when His sovereign rule was established (Mark x. 35-39). This presumptuous prayer, whilst it showed a haughtiness of spirit little acceptable to the Saviour, was redeemed from vulgarity in His

eyes by the noble confession which followed, that they were willing to endure in His service the hardest sufferings which could possibly await them—a confession which they abundantly justified in their after-lives. These various sayings and incidents give us a fairly clear and complete portraiture of the men in the earlier period of their discipleship. They were strong men—bold, brave, self-assertive—with a large infusion of carnal pride that needed to be laid low at the Saviour's feet; and they were full of fierce rage which needed to be subdued to His gentler qualities. But they were devoted to Him with impassioned loyalty and love, and had that resolute faith which learns to count all things as loss for His name's sake. Out of these elements Jesus wrought in one case at least a spirit of almost perfect tenderness and beauty.

3. JAMES

James is speedily lost to view. We do not know to what extent the Master's training

transformed him. He had soon to be baptized with that baptism of which the Lord had spoken. He was the first of the Apostles to drink the cup of martyrdom, and it is not unreasonable to infer that the ambitious daring which had distinguished him in previous scenes hastened that painful but glorious consummation. He brought death upon himself by his consuming zeal, and the noble rage which thrust him into the forefront of danger.

4. JOHN THE BELOVED

John lived long enough to reveal all the gracious effects of his Master's discipline, and to show in himself a veritable transfiguration scene. We think of him as a profoundly receptive nature, perhaps the most receptive and teachable of all the apostolic band. He is presented to us on one occasion leaning on the Saviour's breast, looking up to the Saviour's face, and drinking in His words. That attitude fairly describes his habitual relationship to the Lord. It might have suggested St. Paul's words, "Beholding as

in a glass the glory of the Lord we are changed into the same image from glory to glory." John was transformed by beholding and hearing. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved, which almost implies that he was the disciple who best loved Jesus, and by force of his love had a keener and truer perception of the Master's thought and spirit. He understood and remembered the words of Jesus with a fulness and accuracy which make his evangile the most precious of our inspired documents. And he saw more promptly and perhaps more completely than his companions the divinity hidden in the fleshly tabernacle, "the glory of the only begotten Son of God." To him we owe the preservation of the greater part of our Lord's discourses, and those which are to us and the whole Church perhaps the most precious. He has recorded what we may call "the deeper thoughts of Jesus"—the words which revealed His person and relationship to the Father, the words which unfolded His spiritual aims, and especially the words which were spoken to the inner circle of disciples. John heard

and retained all these sayings with the clear comprehension and faithful memory of an adoring love, and he has given us the most complete knowledge we possess of the Master he knew so well.

5. EAGLE'S VISION

He must have been a man with open eyes and ever-active mind, whose education kept pace with and outstepped his years. If, as is generally believed, he was the author both of the gospel and epistles which bear his name, and also of the book of Revelation, his intellectual growth had been as rapid as his spiritual. The contrast between the illiterate fisherman of Galilee and the mind which penned those works is well-nigh as great as can be imagined. The gospel is the production of a thoughtful, observant, and philosophical mind. The Apocalypse was written by a man who knew the world, who had taken note of all its great movements and events, who understood its political, moral, and social problems, and who was able to

fetch his figures and illustrations from the widest field. Whatever he may have been at the beginning, his later life presents him to us as the most intelligent, scholarly, and original of the Twelve—the man with eagle vision, bold imagination, and poetic genius.

His spiritual development was even more striking. The son of thunder became the incarnation of tenderness and pity. The volcano was changed into a fountain of gentleness and affection. He who would have called down fire from heaven to consume the unbelievers passed in later years into the man who began and ended every discourse with an exhortation to love. Christ had wrought a perfect work in this once rageful, stormy, ambitious nature, subduing it all to His own sweet qualities, leaving in it the strength of the lion, but imparting to it the meekness of the lamb.

CHAPTER VII

PHILIP AND NATHANAE

1. VIGNETTES OF SECOND QUARTETTE

IN passing from the four leading disciples to those who have been called "the second quartette," we step at once on to less familiar ground, and are compelled to hurry over it, because there are so few characteristic marks and incidents to arrest attention. One-half of our Lord's disciples are little more than names to us. The evangelists lose sight of them in beholding and describing the Divine One whom they followed, and we have not even sufficient knowledge of them to furnish a basis for imagination to work upon. It is inevitable, therefore, that we must dismiss them with a brief and somewhat disappointing glance.

2. PHILIP

Philip always stands fifth in the list of the Twelve, though in point of time he was fourth to receive the call, which came to him the day after Jesus had enlisted Andrew and Peter (John i. 43). It is probable that he, like many of the rest, had been a disciple of the Baptist, or at least had felt the stirrings of that prophet's words, and had thus been prepared for a higher service. The work of that God-sent messenger had been avowedly to prepare the way of the Lord, and not the least effective part of it had been done upon these men by impressing them with the conviction that the coming of the Messiah was at hand, and opening their minds for the reception of Him. We can trace his influence in their subsequent thoughts and questionings. His zeal had kindled zeal in them which was not always in accord with Christ's gentler spirit; but his courage and love of righteousness and stern hatred of wrongdoing had infused an element of strength into their character which Jesus was able

to temper and subdue to His own finer mind. He "rested from his labours, but his works did follow him"; and it was to him doubtless, along with others, that our Lord referred in the words, "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour. Other men laboured, and ye have entered into their labours."

3. HIS FIRST MASTER AND FIRST RECRUIT

Philip had almost certainly come under the teaching of the ascetic prophet, for he was associated in close friendship with some who are spoken of as his avowed disciples. His home was in the same town, Bethsaida, in which Peter had his abode, and he was evidently well known by the men whom he now joined. It is to one of them, John, that we owe all the references to him that the Gospel narratives contain. These references are few and brief, but they are sufficient to throw a little light upon his mind and qualities.

Like Andrew, Philip inaugurated his dis-

cipleship by calling another, Nathanael, to the service of Jesus, and in this instance, as in the former, he brought in one perhaps more serviceable than and superior to himself. He shows himself, in that action as in others, a somewhat matter-of-fact man, and a man of few words. He has seen Jesus, and is satisfied that he has found the Messiah; but when Nathanael asks for reasons, and proposes to discuss the question, Philip is sufficiently conscious of his own limitations to decline the argument. He thinks that the best evidence will be furnished by sight, and invites his friend to come and see, with which request Nathanael promptly complied.

4. CHARACTERISTICS

We may justly describe Philip as a man whose intellect was practical and prompt in its decisions, but whose spiritual perception was dull. His mind was precise, methodical, and almost mechanical—the mind of a plodding, accurate, conscientious business man—but with no originality. He had little moral

imagination, and was slow to understand and slow to believe what he could not see. In the miraculous feeding of the multitude he could appreciate at once the material and business aspects of the situation, and calculate how many loaves and how much money it would require to feed all those people ; but it never occurred to him that Jesus would intervene with a higher Power. That was beyond his imagination, because he had never witnessed anything of the kind before. He was ready enough in all matters in which he had former experience to guide him, but hesitated or blundered when the position was new and unusual. He could not make up his mind to introduce the Greeks to Jesus who applied to him for that purpose. It was something quite out of the ordinary course. Jesus had never received foreigners before, and Philip did not make the venture until he had consulted Andrew. Again, when Jesus told the disciples that in knowing Him they knew the Father, Philip blurted out somewhat impatiently, " Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us " (John xiv. 8). He had not been

able to understand that the life and words and works of Jesus had been a revelation of the Father. He wished for some visible appearance of God. It was always the evidence of sight that he sought and prayed for. We should rightly call him a man of "little faith," on whom moral evidences made little impression; and perhaps of all the disciples he was the least receptive and the slowest to comprehend the thoughts and spiritual beauty of the Master. He was the materialist of the company, and needed Christ's most patient and forbearing teaching to develop in him the spiritual mind.

5. NATHANAEL

Nathanael, of Cana in Galilee, the man whom Philip invited to the service of Jesus, was his dear friend and companion. The bond of friendship or kinship had knit many of these disciples together before they were united by our Lord in a higher fellowship. And each one as he heard Christ's call hastened to enlist his friend, that they might still be not

divided. Real friendship implies some similarity in tastes and general disposition. It can only be maintained between those whose deeper thoughts and sympathies are in harmony. But it also admits of striking differences. The best friends are rarely or never copies of each other. They are more frequently complements of each other, the one supplying what the other lacks. The modest and retiring Andrew and the forward, impetuous Peter cling together and lean upon each other, as if each found in his brother the quality needed to complete himself. There is as great a contrast in the two men, Philip and Nathanael, who were fast friends before their discipleship began, and apparently remained fast friends to the last. For they are always coupled together in the Synoptic Gospels. In saying this we assume, according to the universal tradition, that Nathanael was the same man whom the first three evangelists describe as Bartholomew—that is, by his father's or family name, Son of Ptolemy or Tholomew. In John's Gospel Bartholomew is never mentioned, nor is Nathanael in the

Synoptic narratives; yet in all the gospels alike the man thus differently named is identified by the marks that he is made one of the Twelve and always closely associated with Philip.

6. COMPANION AND COUNTERPART

Bartholomew, as we may then call him, seems to have been the counterpart of his friend. Philip, as we have seen, was a man who spoke little and did not think very profoundly. Bartholomew was of readier speech and of meditative mind, disposed to give and find a reason for the things which he believed—a man who had studied the Scriptures and given much thought to the Messianic promises and the hope of Israel. That much we may infer from the brief account given of him in connection with his call (John i. 45–51), which unfortunately is the only mention we have. Jesus, who read his inmost heart, gave him the singularly high testimony, “An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,”—a description which

implies, first, that he had engaged much in that wrestling prayer which changed Jacob into Israel; and, secondly, that he was one who embodied in his thoughts and life the best qualities and traditions of the Jewish people. We may think of him as a man who had grieved much over the moral and religious degeneracy of his times, and to whom the formalism and hypocrisy which had taken the place of true godliness were distressing and offensive. He was longing for a Messiah who would restore the old faith in its purity, and had probably been meditating and praying concerning these things under the fig-tree.

That word of Jesus, which intimated that he and his thoughts had been known before the two met face to face, came like an answer to his prayers, and as a flash of surprise, and gave the finishing-stroke to his decision. Yet it was enough for this guileless man, with his clear intelligence and fine spiritual sympathies, to see Jesus. Natures of this quality and moral discernment no sooner see Jesus than they run to Him.

Nathanael is just one of the disciples who

interest us sufficiently to make us wish we knew more about him. His introduction to us is not without its romantic and even poetic side. The eulogium which Christ passed upon him, higher by far than any other of the Twelve received, suggests to us the most promising material. We naturally picture for that guileless man a prompt and sympathetic yielding to the Saviour's mastery, and an easy development in spiritual strength and beauty. But we have to resign ourselves, with some disappointment, to the silence in which his subsequent life is hidden.

We have just one welcome vision of the man, and then he disappears, leaving us nothing but conjectures of what the Master made of him, and how the predictive beginnings were fulfilled.

CHAPTER VIII

MATTHEW THE PUBLICAN

1. THE CALLING OF LEVI

WE can hardly think of Jesus apart from His twelve disciples. They are so inseparably linked with Him in the story, that we may easily make the mistake of supposing that the whole of them accompanied Him in all His journeys, and that He called them all virtually at the same time and quite at the beginning of His ministry. The truth is that He gathered them round Him gradually, and certainly between the calling of the first six and the rest there was an interval of some length. Jesus had been to Jerusalem, had passed through Samaria and made believers there, had done several miracles, and preached the Sermon on the Mount, before

those disciples were enlisted who now claim our attention.

Matthew and Thomas occupy the seventh and eighth places in the privileged company, though the evangelists vary in the order in which they place them. Yet, as with Andrew and Peter, Philip and Bartholomew, they are invariably spoken of together, and perhaps on that account it has been surmised that they were brothers. It is much more probable that they were simply friends. Matthew, as in the case of Bartholomew and others, is presented to us under two names. He was called Levi at the time when his discipleship commenced, and the new name was probably given to him as a mark of the new life. The account of his summons to the service is given with very little variation by the first three evangelists (Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27). It is a brief, picturesque record. It was near the city of Capernaum, and by the seashore. Here was the diverging point of three great roads leading to Tyre, Damascus, and Jerusalem, and a customs-house had long been established to

receive tolls and duties from the travellers and their merchandise, which were constantly passing by. It may be inferred from what follows that Matthew was the head official at the post, and was engaged in receiving dues as our Lord passed by. The brief command, "Follow Me," found the man prepared. It was not the first time that the voice of Jesus had thrilled him. He had doubtless heard that Sermon on the Mount which he afterwards so fully reported, and witnessed some of the miracles which had been done about Capernaum. His heart had been deeply moved. The material was ready for the kindling, and that one word of Jesus applied the spark. Without a moment's hesitation he rose, left his business and companions, and followed Jesus.

2. CÆSAR'S TOLLMAN

The enlistment of this man was full of significance. It was an act of peculiar courage and wise foresight. It was a deliberate challenge of the popular judgment and

defiance of a deep-rooted popular prejudice. No men were detested more in the Jewish land than these Roman tax-collectors. Men who are engaged in this occupation never win any great love. It is not in human nature to pay tolls and taxes with enthusiastic joy. But there were special causes for the opprobrium which the publican of our Lord's time secured. The taxes were collected by a system which lent itself to exaction and iniquity. They were farmed, or, in other words, sold to the highest bidder. The head official undertook to pay a certain amount to the government, and then, by fair means or means unfair, drew from the taxpayers that amount and as much more for himself as possible. It needed exceptional conscientiousness to resist the temptation to extortion. Moreover, the taxes were paid by an unwilling people to a foreign government—to that Roman power which they hated and only endured because they could not shake it off. The publican was a symbol and daily reminder of the yoke under which they groaned. And when a Jew undertook

this office he was looked upon as one who had sacrificed his patriotism and sold himself for pay to the Roman masters. It is not surprising that in the popular sentiment he was classed with the most disreputable of the people. "Publican and harlot," "publican and sinner," were spoken of together.

3. WHAT CHRIST SAW IN THE PUBLICAN

Our Lord took a bold step in calling one of these publicans to His company. It is certain that He had no part in that kind of patriotism which fiercely resented the Roman rule. He regarded it as a lawful and right thing to pay tribute to the established government, and therefore He did not share the prejudice against the collectors of the tribute. Moreover, He knew that some of the publicans did not deserve the condemnation which was visited on their class. They were just men, who honestly tried to do their duty and keep within the bounds of right and law. He must have known that Matthew was one of these fair-dealing men ; for, so far as we can

judge, He never called one to His circle of disciples whose life had not been fairly straight and reputable; and He saw other qualities in this man which the popular prejudice was too blind to see, and which marked him out as specially fitted for discipleship. There was a spirit of devotion and willingness, ready for great service and great sacrifice. This man had evidently more of the world's goods than the disciples previously called. The farewell feast which he gave to a numerous company indicates considerable wealth. And he was giving up perhaps more than any of the others. Besides all that, his office and position implied that he possessed a higher educational equipment than the other disciples whom he now joined. It could not have escaped the far-seeing discernment of our Lord that he had literary gifts which in after-years would render invaluable service to the great cause.

So far as we know Jesus committed nothing to writing Himself, but it was part of His divine wisdom to secure some men in His following who would take careful note of all

that He said and did, and be able to write and preserve a careful account of the whole. There is little doubt that in making this selection He had in view the great possibilities which would be developed in this man. Hence, though one of the hated class, he was chosen. The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man judgeth by the outward appearance, but the Lord judgeth by the heart.

4. ROMAN AGENT, JEWISH PATRIOT

Here we have said nearly all that can be said of Matthew. The gospel which he wrote tells us nothing directly about the author, and little can we gather from it indirectly concerning the man himself. The evangelists were sublimely unconscious of themselves as they wrote. No other authors whom the world has known have so completely lost and hidden themselves in their subject as these men; and Matthew, even more than the rest, has kept his own person and thoughts in the far background to make Jesus all in all. We learn from His gospel nothing of the man

save that his observation was very keen and accurate, and his memory most careful and retentive. We may infer also from his familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures and the traditions of the Rabbis, that he had been carefully instructed in all that pertained to the Jewish religion, whilst his general education had been greatly above the average. And, finally, it appears on almost every page of his gospel that, though he had accepted office under the Roman government, he was inspired by a higher kind of patriotism than most of his countrymen knew. He was intensely in love with his own Jewish people, proud of their history and noble traditions and of the promises given to them, and all on fire as he thought of the coming glory which Christ's redemption would bring. Christ justified His own unerring wisdom in setting aside the universal sentiment against the publicans, and calling from this reviled class one of His most gifted, most devoted, and most serviceable followers. The Church perhaps owes to this man more of its knowledge of our Lord than to any other of the

disciples save Peter and John. "Base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are."

CHAPTER IX

THOMAS THE PESSIMIST

1. DIDYMUS

THOMAS, the disciple who is associated in the narrative with Matthew, was, as John tells us, surnamed Didymus, or the twin. Imagination has busily employed itself on this word, and found a twin-brother for the man in various New Testament personages, and even in our Lord Himself. All this, as need hardly be said, is pure imagination. We know absolutely nothing about his kinsmen, place of residence, or occupation, nor are we told when or how he was called to discipleship. The Synoptic evangelists give us nothing but his bare name, and, as with Philip, we are indebted to the Gospel of John for the few but interesting particulars which invest him with flesh and blood, and make

him stand out before us a real man, with distinct and impressive qualities of his own.

2. THE DOUBTER

He comes forward in the closing scenes of the Lord's ministry, and plays a conspicuous part there which has fixed itself deep in the thoughts and memories of the Church, and won for him the not very enviable name of Thomas the doubter. Of all the disciples he was the hardest to convince of, and the last to believe in, the resurrection of Jesus; and the very stubbornness of his scepticism, together with the proofs which were offered to remove it, and the magnificent certainty into which he was brought, have furnished one of the most cogent evidences of the great fact. It was well said by one of the quaint old preachers, "Thomas doubted in order that we might have no doubt." He meant that the scepticism of this disciple was so thorough, confirmed, and obstinate that it needed the most unmistakable evidence to overthrow it. The Risen Christ

must have been mightily real to convince this determined unbeliever. What satisfied him should be enough for all. He doubted that the Church of all the ages might have no reason to doubt.

And truly this man was slow of belief. He belonged to that class of minds whom pope and priest have always banned and excommunicated, whom the whole Church in past times regarded with dread and abhorrence, and whom some good people now think of with mingled pity, anger, and despair. He disbelieved Christ's most distinct promises; he met with stolid defiance the witness of his fellow-disciples. He thought that the women had been deluded, that Peter and John had been carried away by some creature of their own brains, that the whole company had imagined a vain thing. He was so rooted and fixed in his gloomy scepticism that he absented himself from the assemblies of the disciples, as if their presence could only bring distressing memories now that his great hope was dead. For a while he fell into that darkness and

bitterness of heart in which a man believes in nothing, neither God nor his nearest friend, nor his own self, but just sits brooding, sick, weary, and desperate amid the ruins of his shattered life.

3. CHRIST'S TREATMENT OF DOUBT

This was the man whom Christ tenderly brought back to faith, whom He pitied and sweetly chided, but did not condemn, whom He gently forced into conviction again by evidences which would never be repeated, by the very sight and touch of His nail-prints and wounds. For He knew that in this doubter, in spite of his doubts, there was the making of a strong disciple—there was the honesty of a true heart, the courage of a possible martyr. If he could only be assured of the truth, he would be one of the most valiant soldiers and defenders of the truth. He who had passed through deepest darkness to the clearest light would be well fitted to lead others into the light. He who had fought with the grimmest Apollyon

of all, and overcome, would be well able to support other tempted and trembling soldiers in their conflict. This was not a man to censure and cast off, but to bear with and win and bind fast by proofs which even he could not refuse. That was how the Saviour met this doubter, and thereby gave to all his followers an example of the patience, forbearance, and tenderness which they should use in dealing with other doubters.

4. TEMPERAMENT IN RELIGION

There are always two opposite types of mind found alongside in the religious world. There are some to whom belief comes easily. They pass into the clear morning light of faith just as the day-spring breaks on a summer morning. Faith is to them a gift of God. It comes without effort. They have no experience of any struggle and conflict. They have never had to fight for a conviction. They move into a haven of peace, and get anchored fast there without any buffeting against adverse currents and angry waters.

Belief is a sweet instinct—a child born without pain and nursed into strength without labour and tearful watching. They accept Christ without a question. They want no proofs. He Himself has spoken to their hearts, and it is enough. Such a type of disciple John was, and perhaps Nathanael. And there are others who reach the quiet waters through rough and contrary seas, with fightings within and fears without. Through many a region of chill, dark doubt they make their way to the warmth and light. They believe nothing until they have proved it. They wish to understand before they can accept. Every conviction comes slowly. They sometimes spend years in the shivering realm of uncertainty,—striving to banish their doubts, yet still pursued by them ; longing for assurance, yet failing to find it ; holding on to God and Christ, yet fearful of losing Them ; seeing all manner of difficulties, and seeing nothing else very clearly ; praying to get rock under their feet, yet afraid to let their feet down, lest it should be sand after all. And sometimes they are brought forth, as was

Thomas, into noon-day light and perfect trust, and develop into giants of faith and devoted servants of the Lord. And Christ finds a place for both these types in the circle of His chosen ones. He is not angry with those to whom the light comes slowly, and who have a hard fight for their faith. Why should He be angry? He knows that Thomas cannot help being Thomas, and He bears with him until he has changed the doubt into a mighty faith, as in this case. The man who passed through this night of fear and groping finished with the grandest confession of adoration and joyful certainty which had yet been uttered: "My Lord and my God!" The doubter was the first to see and declare the full unquestionable divinity of our Lord.

5. THE HEROIC PESSIMIST

The scepticism of this disciple is the feature by which he is mainly remembered. But there are other characteristics equally marked. His attachment and devotion to the Master were as deep and strong as those of any

other disciple. He seems to have loved with a love that counted no sacrifice too great and no peril too hazardous to undertake in proof of it. He was one of the bravest of the brave, ready to meet gravest danger, and go into the very jaws of death in the company of his Lord. When Jesus started out on His last journey to Jerusalem, Thomas had a premonition of the death to which He was going, as indeed they all had ; but while the rest sought to dissuade Him from His purpose, Thomas said, sadly but boldly, " Let us also go, that we may die with Him " (John xi. 16). There was no flinching. With the prospect of death in view, love would make it sweet to die in that company. Indeed, it was the strength of his love that helped to deepen the darkness of his subsequent doubt. The loss of his dear Lord had dealt him a stunning and paralysing blow, killed his joy, broken all his hopes to pieces, unhinged his mind, and plunged him into an abyss and bewilderment of despair. He was naturally inclined to wrap himself in the robes of gloom and mourning—brave, affec-

tionate, and ready to despond. Thomas the pessimist would be almost a more appropriate name than Thomas the sceptic. His doubts came from the emotional part of him rather than the intellectual. He was one of those men who see nothing but clouds when others see sunlight, who cannot believe the promises because they are so wonderfully cheering and good. Thomas was always inclined to anticipate evil. He saw dark things coming, and resigned himself gloomily to them when they came. There was something in him of the Roman Stoic who bore the pains of life with uncomplaining fortitude, yet believed that pain was the inevitable lot of human life from which there was no escape. All the recorded words and questions of this man have a touch of sadness. When the Saviour spoke to the disciples cheerfully of the place that He was going to prepare for them, Thomas saw nothing cheerful in that, but only gloomy uncertainty and hopeless separation. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John xiv. 5). He was always prepared to

expect the worst. He seemed to think that the powers of darkness had the upper hand in this world, and that goodness must always be put to shame. And when the Lord was crucified, it confirmed his darkest fears. He said to his heart, "This is just what I knew all along, just what I expected, and what must always be in this sorrowful and disappointing world. It is vain to believe in good, and to hope that any good will be victorious."

6. "THE SUNNIER SIDE OF DOUBT"

It was the pessimism that made him so hard to convince when our Lord rose again. He could not believe it, simply because it was so glad and great and blessed. It was too good a thing to be true. Thomas was the type of the high-minded, courageous, and resolute men who never turn their backs on the good fight, yet find it always a hard and cheerless fight, because they have no smile of hope on their faces and no assurance of victory.

Yet these despondent men are sometimes lifted to the mountain-tops of faith and confidence by the surprising joys which come to them. Their moods change rapidly. From the deep Valley of Humiliation and the grounds of Giant Despair they are raised to the Delectable Mountains and the height of celestial vision. So it was with Thomas, when the risen Christ was truly revealed to him and proved. He who had believed not at all then believed most, and passed into a radiant confidence and joy; and we may well suppose that the pessimism of the man was thoroughly cured by the sweet medicine which had been administered to it, and that afterwards his love and courage and faith were brightened and strengthened by a hopefulness and cheerfulness as great as any other of the disciples showed.

CHAPTER X

LESSER APOSTLES

OF the four disciples who still remain to be noticed, three will have to be dismissed with an exceeding brief mention. There are in truth no particulars given of them. Their names are recorded, and in two instances their parentage, and everything else that they were and did is left untold. The most ingenious imagination would hardly attempt to construct a portrait or character-sketch from such scanty material.

1. JAMES THE SON OF ALPHÆUS

James the son of Alphæus has indeed been the subject of well-nigh interminable discussion; but it has been discussion on the question of identity, which it is no part of our purpose to pursue here. It has

been contended that he was James the Lord's brother, referred to in Gal. i. 19, one of the pillars of the Church in Jerusalem, and the writer of the well-known epistle which bears his name. If we could accept that conclusion, it would furnish us with ample room for discourse on the qualities and services of the man. But the theory has been generally abandoned as untenable. He may possibly have been the cousin of Jesus, for his mother seems to be spoken of as the sister of our Lord's mother in John xix. 25; but the meaning of that passage is doubtful, and may bear another interpretation.

We can only be certain of two or three items of relationship. The first three evangelists describe him as James the son of Alphæus; and we are told also (Mark ii. 14) that Matthew was the son of Aphæus. It may have been another Alphæus, though in that case it is probable that some note of the distinction would have been given; and we may reasonably conclude that these two disciples were brothers. In

addition to this St. Mark speaks of him as James the Less, doubtless to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee (Mark xv. 40); and comparing that with John xix. 25, we discover that his mother's name was Mary, and that her husband was called Clopas as well as Alphæus.

There in this group of not very enlightening words and names our information ends.

2. A MOTHER OF APOSTLES

One significant incident only is disclosed by these passing notes of relationship. We get a picture of a gracious, believing household. The mother at least, if not the father, is one of the most devoted followers of Jesus—one of the women who ministered to Him of their substance as He went about His ministry—one of those who clung to Him to the very last, watched beside the cross, and brought sweet spices to anoint His body on the morning of the Resurrection. She had the honour of sending two sons into the Apostolic company. And, as we have seen

already with the mother of Zebedee's children, this woman, by her own faith in and devotion to the Saviour, doubtless gave the bent to the minds of her sons, and encouraged and inspired them to decide for the higher service. In the whole story of the disciples up to this point we have been reminded repeatedly how the influences and affections of friendship and family life acted powerfully in drawing one after another, and filling up Christ's little company with men who had been united to each other in love before they yielded to His greater love. Mothers especially had a great part in furnishing recruits for the chosen band, as they have had the main part in training lives for the Master's service ever since.

3. LEBBÆUS THADDÆUS—JUDAS NOT ISCARIOT

The next on the list is the disciple with three names. Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus (Matt. x. 3), and who is called by St. Luke (vi. 16) Judas the brother or rather

son of James. He appears also under that name in St. John (xiv. 22). The third name was probably that which he originally bore, and the first two were added as terms of endearment in his childhood, or as descriptive terms to mark his special features after his discipleship commenced. The etymology of Thaddæus is unknown; but Lebbæus almost certainly means "the courageous one." And we may well believe that our Lord or his fellow Apostles gave him that surname, because, though unknown to us, he was well known to them for that particular quality.

4. HIS ONE QUESTION

Apart from his names we remember him only from one brief question which he asked (John xiv. 22); and that question was deemed worth recording, not because it contained any light and wisdom, but because of the gracious and illumining answer which it drew from the Saviour. Jesus had just been saying that He would show Himself to His disciples, though the world would not see Him. And

Judas took Him up, with the somewhat bold challenge, "How can it be that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" There was some little courage in the question, for it almost amounted to a contradiction of the Master's word; but there was also the frankness of an honest mind, which did not understand and was not ashamed to confess its ignorance. We have a man here who showed the marks of a true disciple; for the true disciple is always ready with questions, eager to learn, and deeply conscious of his need of teaching. Like all the disciples, he had followed Jesus with a great hope and expectation, but the hope was either vague or shaping for itself things that would never be. Whatever the hope was in the mind of Judas, it needed Christ's visible presence and power for the realisation of it. And this talk about a departure, and a time when He would be no longer manifest to the world, and yet present and mighty with them, was mystifying and meaningless.

Judas was perhaps not more spiritually dull than the rest. They had all to have

their eyes opened before they came to see the inner meaning of Jesus' words, and the question of Judas serves to show in what a cloudland they were all walking. Christ could not explain Himself fully then; but He gave an answer which they would understand afterwards, and which throws a gleam of light on the mind and heart of Judas: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him." We should not be wrong in inferring that Jesus saw in this disciple an earnest spirit of love and obedience, and intended to imply that his love and obedience would reveal to him in due time what was then hidden.

5. SIMON THE CANANÆAN

The third disciple of this group was Simon the Cananæan, of whose parentage and place of origin we know nothing. It was formerly supposed, through a mistaken translation in the Authorised Version, that this man was

a Canaanite (Matt. x. 4), and had at least a mixture of Gentile blood. We know now that the true reading is Cananæan, and that the word does not refer to a place, but to a sect or party among the Jews. It is practically synonymous with "Zealot," the other name given to this disciple in Luke vi. 15.

6. THE ZEALOT

We possess here, then, just one not insignificant fact—that this disciple belonged to the most bigoted, intolerant, and fiercest of the Jewish sects. The Zealots were the declared enemies of the Roman domination. They hated it with an intense hatred, advocated the refusal of tribute, avowed as their deliberate policy the overthrow of the foreign yoke, and were continually engaged in secret plots and conspiracies to accomplish that end. They were intensely conservative and proud of everything Jewish, and held in contempt and detestation all men who were outside the Jewish race.

It is strange and most interesting that a man who held these views should have formed one of a company whose commission was to be, "Go unto all nations." He who had been fiercely prejudiced against all men save his own people was brought under the spell of Him who loved and had come to save all men. It is still more significant when we remember that in the same company was Matthew the publican, the man who had been an official of the Roman Government, a willing supporter therefore of the foreign yoke, and in his political views and sympathies the very antipodes of Simon.

It might have seemed impossible to reconcile and bring into perfect harmony such extreme antagonisms. They were men divided from each other by a wide, deep gulf of thought and feeling, and even of impassioned hatred. Yet the publican and the zealot clasped hands and joined hearts at Jesus' feet. In the furnace of His love these opposites were welded together. It was a picture and prediction on a small scale of what would come to pass in the greater

Church, where walls of partition were to be broken down, where national antipathies were to be crucified and buried with Christ and rise again transfigured into the glory of a uniting faith and charity, and where there were to be neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ all and in all.

CHAPTER XI

JUDAS THE BETRAYER

1. "THE BASE JUDÆAN"

THE disciple to whom we now turn, and who is always placed last of the Twelve by the evangelists, is among the best known of them, though it had been perhaps better for him if we knew less and if he had never been brought out of his obscurity. Jesus said of him the most terrible thing that could be said of any man—"It had been good for that man if he had not been born"; and for nineteen centuries the world has repeated those words and assented to them. Judas Iscariot stands yoked or pilloried with Pontius Pilate as objects of the world's scorn and execration, and as men who won for themselves everlasting infamy. But the name of the false disciple carries a heavier load

of shame and guilt than that of the Roman governor. The treachery of Judas has in all ages of the Christian Church been regarded as the foulest deed that was ever committed. Artists have used this man as a subject for the delineation of the most hellish human passions. Poets have conjured up all the horrors of the imagination to represent his fierce malignity and hideous ingratitude. Thousands of men, whose lives gave them little claim to be ranked with Christ's followers, have yet prayed with unfeigned fervour to be saved from the guilt of Christ's betrayer. Every Christian child has heard with a shudder the story of his crime. Charity almost stops short at the mention of his name, and a feeling of abhorrence springs up, which we hardly try to restrain. The eleven men who were associated with him are held in immortal honour and covered with a glory not their own; but this man, who sold his Friend, Teacher, Lover, and Master for a paltry handful of silver, has fallen out of the shining ranks into an abyss of scoffing and loathing, and the place he

might have won was exchanged for a suicide's grave and universal condemnation.

Apart from the one action which gained his dreadful notoriety there are few facts to record. He was the son of some unknown Simon, and his title of Iscariot indicates the place from which he hailed—Nerioth, a village in Judæa which has now passed out of existence. Shakespeare probably refers to him in the words, "The base Judæan who sold a pearl richer than all his tribe." In any case, he was distinguished from his fellow-disciples by the fact that, while they were all Galilæans, he came from the country which lay around Jerusalem, and possibly on this account he was never thoroughly at one with the rest.

2. TREASURER TO THE TWELVE

He must have been well versed in business affairs, with perhaps exceptional educational equipment, and of marked ability. For he was made treasurer and administrator of the fund which wealthy women contributed for

the maintenance of the company (Luke viii. 3), and the fact that he was charged with this responsible duty proves that they had a thorough belief in his honesty, a confidence which remained unshaken up to the very night of the Betrayal. It was only afterwards that they discovered, what Jesus had perhaps known for some time, that the deep-rooted avarice of the man had drawn him into dishonesty, and that he had been in the habit of extracting money from the common purse for his own ends (John xii. 6). The thing which was hidden from their unsuspecting eyes could not remain long hidden from the Master, who read the secret thoughts and knew what was in man. It was perhaps the greed and deception which He saw working and growing in this disciple that called from Jesus His many warning words about covetousness, and about the hidden things which would be brought to light. We are told by St. John (vi. 64) that Jesus knew from the beginning who would betray Him, and this has suggested many a difficult question. How could He, foreknowing all

that would happen, deliberately employ this man in His service, entrust him with all His teachings and confidences, and even send him out to preach, heal the sick, and cast out devils? It is as if He purposely introduced a traitor into the company, and gave him opportunity and means to accomplish his fell design. And that is not easy to reconcile with the Saviour's perfect truthfulness and absolute freedom from guile. The explanation will probably be found in the thought that Jesus from the first saw in this man certain evil tendencies which might develop into such enormity as that which they did reach at last, but that He saw better qualities which might possibly under His training overcome the baser things. The fight between the spirits of darkness and light in the man was going on continuously, not unobserved by the Master, who was desiring and hoping and praying and doing all that was possible to secure the victory for the nobler side. But Jesus saw that the man was yielding more and more to the carnal and the devilish, sinking lower

and lower, until at last it became manifest that he was capable of and bent on the terrible crime. And Jesus gave him up, saying, "What thou doest, do quickly."

Was it coveteousness alone that dragged him down to this unnatural and truly infernal deed? That is not likely. Men never commit a great sin or do a noble action from one motive alone. There is always a combination of motives, and the sin which is least excusable is never done without some motive which supplies the sinner with an excuse.

3. PLEAS FOR THE TRAITOR

There have not been wanting attempts to defend Judas, to extenuate his crime, and even to whitewash his character. Thomas de Quincey particularly undertook to prove that he was not so black as he has been painted, that he erred more through lack of judgment than through criminal intent. His object, according to De Quincey, was not to give Christ up to the power of His enemies,

but to force Him to use His own miraculous power against them—in fact, to compel Jesus to resort to force and establish His kingdom by force. It was an attempt to drive the Master's hand, and no one was more surprised and shocked than Judas himself at the untoward result. He went and hanged himself because all his calculations had failed, and because he discovered that in betraying Christ he had been both a criminal and a besotted fool. So say the defenders of the man. Yet were this true or a part of the truth, it would only prove that Judas was an early Jesuit of the worst type, a man who thought that the end justified the most immoral and infamous means. Whatever the motives, nothing can take from the utter baseness of the action, that he sold his Master, to those who hated Him and were seeking His death, for thirty pieces of silver.

4. THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS

It was not the money alone assuredly. Judas had hoped that Jesus would set up a

kingdom by supernatural aid, which would secure for the disciples honour, authority, and perhaps wealth. He had been disappointed, and he keenly felt and bitterly resented the disappointment. If he had ever loved the Master at all, the love had cooled down, and perhaps changed to something almost the opposite of love, now that his secular and carnal hopes had been taken from him. There was possibly a trace of vindictiveness and a spice of revenge in the act of treachery. He was one of those who had followed Jesus, not attracted by His moral and spiritual beauty, but for the sake of what he expected to gain in the way of worldly ambition. And when he found that there was nothing of this kind coming, his chagrin developed into wrath and spite. In addition to this it is almost certain that he was staking all on one last throw by handing Jesus over to the priests and rulers. He hoped even now, as De Quincey supposed, that this step might compel Jesus to change His tactics and appear at last as a Messiah armed and mighty with carnal weapons. His subsequent remorse is hardly explicable

on any other supposition. It was so sudden, so complete, so desperate, and showed such an awful revulsion of feeling, that to understand it we are almost obliged to think that his last hope had utterly failed. When he found that Jesus quietly yielded to His enemies, and that in betraying Him he had really given Him up to condemnation and crucifixion, all the madness, the folly, the malignity, the miscalculation, the purposeless guilt, the horrible enormity which he saw in a lightning-flash of self-revelation, combined to overwhelm him and crush him under a load of self-loathing. He threw down with disgust the price of blood, and rushed to find oblivion in suicide. Yet, even allowing this, we cannot forget that the sacred writers never attempt in any way to conceal their loathing of the man and his deed. The evangelist John no doubt expresses the feeling of all the disciples in the strong and unsparing language of condemnation which he uses. There is not the least extenuation suggested or allowed. The man is spoken of with intolerable anger and scorn.

Thus terribly ended the life which for three years had been under the highest influences, which had trodden on the very verge of sainthood and might have reached it, showing to us that men may walk in very divine light, and yet be all the time going down into darkness. So this son of perdition was lost to Jesus and the chosen company, and the sacred Twelve for the time being had one place vacant, which the Lord in due season and in His own unexpected way filled.

PART THIRD

*THE TRAINING AND MAKING
OF THE APOSTLES*

CHAPTER XII

CLEARING THE GROUND

1. ROUGH ORE

WE have now outlined the character of the men whom Jesus gathered around Himself. We have seen the kind and quality of the material which He undertook to bring into subjection to His own mind and shape for service. It would not have been regarded as very promising material by any other master. No one would have taken such pupils in hand unless he had been endowed with unlimited patience, and also with unlimited confidence in his own teaching and subduing power. These men were like rough, unhewn blocks from the quarry, with many a fault in the marble too, which might have made the most skilful workman despair of the best results. One of the last of the Messianic predictions (Mal. iii. 3) represents

the messenger of the Covenant sitting over a furnace and purging his servants in the fire as gold and silver are purified. That is not unlike the work which Jesus had to do with His disciples before they could "offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

2. THE REFINER

His training throughout was in the first place a kind of purging. It was, as John the Baptist called it, a separation of the chaff from the wheat—nay, more than that, an inward baptism of fire which would consume and destroy elements in them that had become a second nature. He took them at a time of life when a man's education is generally supposed to be nearly complete. They were old enough to have formed views, prejudices, prepossessions, and convictions, and unfortunately the greater part of their thoughts, moral and religious, had been turned and shaped in a wrong direction. The work of Jesus would have been much easier if He could have commenced with the

fresh, unprejudiced, plastic minds of children, and slowly wrought them into the instruments which He sought. The short duration of His ministry made that impossible, and He had to begin with men whose thoughts had been developed, fixed, and hardened under other hands. A great part of His teaching, therefore, was to undo what had been wrongly done, to make as it were a clean page on which He could write afresh. What He said of all men was especially true of these disciples: "Ye must be born again"; and "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." They were required to go back before they could make any progress, and to unlearn and forget before their minds could receive and understand His higher truths. Their main notions of religion and morality, of the requirements of the Law, and of the Messianic kingdom had come, not directly from the Sacred Scriptures, but from the Scriptures as perverted by tradition and misinterpreted by Scribes and Rabbis. They were in large measure in

bondage to these authorities, with their petty rules and rigid, unlovely, and ungodly orthodoxy. Jesus had to deliver them from this bondage before they could walk with Him in liberty. He was constantly sweeping away with authoritative voice the traditions which had been to them unquestionable as the very word of God. "It hath been said by them of old time, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not evil." That was the kind of correction and drastic cleansing from prejudice and error which He was habitually administering. He was pulling down and building up always together, not merely removing the false, but providing the true to fill its place, and so overcoming the evil with the positive good. Sometimes the wrong thing was so deeply rooted and fixed in them that He had to expel it by a sort of violence, by using purposely exaggerated words and saying almost more than He meant, to make them believe that He meant something — as when, for instance, He declared, "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the

other also"; and "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"; and "Forgive not seven times, but seventy times seven," and in numerous other sayings. It needed extraordinary emphasis and insistence to free these men's minds from the trammels in which they had been held.

3. THE PERSONAL SPELL OF THE MASTER

A far greater thing was needed to make them submit meekly and cheerfully to this kind of correction, and this was, that from the first He should inspire them with unlimited trust in Himself. He was upsetting all their ideas, dethroning their ideals, flinging aside their beloved and adored authorities, and almost trampling in the dust things which had been well-nigh sacred to them. It shows what a grip He had upon them, and how completely He established His mastery over their minds and consciences, that they yielded to Him absolutely and invariably in all these things. They had no

will of their own when His will was pronounced, except to assent and obey. From the very beginning of their service, before they understood Him at all, before any notion of His divinity and supreme greatness dawned upon them, they recognised His masterhood in such a way that it was never questioned. They never challenged His authority nor contradicted His "Verily I say unto you." They continually misunderstood; they often asked foolish questions and suggested unwise plans and actions, because they had not caught the drift of His mind and had not learned to look at things with His eyes. But they never debated with Him as though they thought He might possibly be in fault. Never was there the feeblest attempt to set up their judgment against His own. Others asked Him by what authority He said and did these things, but the question never came from their lips. Not once did they hesitate to do His bidding. Often, as we read, they were greatly amazed by His actions and sayings. Sometimes what He said gave

them a sort of galvanic shock, and they cried out with bewilderment, "How can these things be?" But they received them all without a protest, without so much as a low murmur of dissent. His words were as the words of God to them, and they trusted and obeyed with the most implicit and child-like trust which the human heart has ever known. The sway which He exercised over these men was the most wonderful thing that He did, almost a greater witness of His power than the miracles which He wrought. And without this, without their uttermost submission to Him and absolute assurance of His unerring truthfulness and wisdom, it would have been impossible to correct, purge, teach, and shape them as He desired.

4. THE REVEALER OF THE HEART

There was another feature in Christ's dealing with these disciples which greatly helped the corrective and purging part of His training. He invited their perfect confidence in Him, and encouraged them to

frank and fearless utterance of their thoughts. He not only knew what was in them often before they spoke, but He sought in every possible way to make them show what was in them, and reveal without misgiving their doubts and hesitations, their gropings and misunderstandings, their crude and imperfect views. They had no temptation to hide anything from Him, because, no matter how absurd the self-revelations which they made, He never criticised them harshly, nor humbled and rebuked them unnecessarily. A great part of His teaching was given in answer to their questions. The questions were often childish, stupid, and even silly, but the answers were always illuminating. And He never checked the questioning; He invariably welcomed it, and, however extravagant, unreasonable, or dark it might be, on no occasion did He show the least trace of scorn, anger, or impatience in dealing with it. There were innumerable times when He might easily have been provoked to indulge in irony and satire at their expense. Clever men are often disposed to do this

when they have dull and slowly working minds to deal with, but Jesus was too sweetly reasonable and too forbearing in His wisdom to yield to this temptation. His purpose was to draw out from them all of which He did not approve, and not to force it back into silence. The honest confession of an error was the surest way to its correction and removal.

5. EDUCATION BY COMRADESHIP

We read more than once that they came to tell Him both what they had done and what they had taught, and they did not keep back, we may be sure, what they had thought. They were glad and eager to tell Him. It was a delightful and refreshing thing to report their proceedings and go over the story as they sat round Him and looked into His face. That speaks volumes. They knew that He would listen to them attentively, that He would not appear to listen as some do while their thoughts are far away. They knew that He would be

interested in all they had to say, and that, even if they told Him small and trivial and unworthy things, He would not grow weary and impatient. Jesus not only spake as never man spake, but also listened as never man listened. He was the sweetest and kindest of hearers; and a patient listener is far rarer than a clever talker. There are some of us who never get to know what others are thinking and feeling, because we are too full of our own thoughts to attend to theirs. We can talk by the hour together of what we have done and said and thought, but our minds go off at a tangent at once if others begin to tell us what they have been doing and thinking. And teachers who wish to do all the talking themselves, and think that it is a little beneath them to give kindly and respectful hearing to the questions and talk of their pupils, rarely learn anything themselves or help others to learn. The disciples always found Jesus a willing and sympathetic hearer. He encouraged them to talk. He wanted to know their every thought, emotion, and desire, partly

because He dearly loved them, and no less because only in this way, by getting from them a frank exposure of everything which was in them, could He enlighten their vague conceptions and rectify their errors. And they were never afraid to tell Him anything and everything. His gentleness, His infinite good-humour, His serene and unprovokable temper, His kindly long-suffering, dispelled their fears. He never pulled them up sharply, never told them that they were incorrigibly stupid, never shut them up in anger when they said things which caused Him pain. Sometimes He sighed and uttered some sad, pathetic words of wonder at their unbelief or incomprehension, such as "How is it that ye do not understand?" or "How is it that ye have no faith?" But that was the hardest thing He said. Otherwise He heard them with perfect equanimity, with immeasurable patience, with a kind and motherly forbearance that never failed. And hence they learned to trust Him with their most secret thoughts and to hide nothing from Him, and hence all that was wrong

and untrue and perverse and foolish in them was brought out and laid under His searching and forgiving and correcting eyes ; and so He slowly led them out of their darkness into His clear light and truth.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GRADUAL OPENING OF THEIR MINDS AND HEARTS

1. GRADUATED INSTRUCTION

THE evangelist who knew the Master best describes His training of the Twelve in the words, "Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace." He led them gently, step by step, into more of truth and comprehension, repeating His lessons unwearingly and graduating them to their growing capacity and experience. He gave them milk or meat and each day's necessary food as they were able to bear it. He never forgot that they were beginners in religious things, and that He was leading them through paths which had not been trodden heretofore. His main thoughts were new to them and strange. It would have been

unreasonable to expect that they would grasp them at once in all their power and beauty. He was a merciful High Priest, who had compassion on their ignorance and weakness, and was content to wait for their slow development. At first they saw all things dimly, like the man in the gospel story whose eyes were only half opened ; and He was continually imparting and withholding light on the principle, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

2. GRADUAL SELF-REVELATION

He unfolded His own person to them by degrees. For a long time they walked with Him and did not know Him. They saw Him through a glass darkly. He hid His supreme greatness from them, and they did not suspect it. At the beginning He spoke little about Himself. He allowed His works and words to speak for Him. He did not even tell them distinctly that He was the Messiah—the Christ. They believed that

they had found the Messiah, but they hardly learned it from His lips, and for some time they were not quite certain of it. Still less did He announce to them at the outset His divine Sonship and His oneness with the Father. It was in His later ministry and after His resurrection that He disclosed His glory and made known to them His divine claims, and that He had all power in heaven and earth. It was through the unfolding to them of His perfect humanity that He prepared them for the recognition of His divinity. It was through the sinlessness and graciousness of the man that they were brought to the confession, "My Lord and my God." Their increasing knowledge of and reverence for His person are strikingly shown by the different terms in which they addressed Him. In the Authorised Version they almost invariably call Him "Master," but that word is a translation of four distinct Greek titles. They began by addressing Him as "Didascalos"—Teacher. Soon they changed that to the more significant name "Epistates," which means Superintendent

and Protector. Later on they called Him "Kathēgētēs"—Leader, Guide, Commander. And finally and for ever afterwards they spoke of Him as "Kurios"—that is, Master, Lord, absolute Owner. Thus slowly did His greatness reveal itself and take complete possession of their affections and wills. Yet they only knew Him fully when He had vanished out of their sight.

3. THE LESSON IN SACRIFICE

In the same gradual way He expounded to them His doctrine, explained His purpose, showed them the nature of His kingdom, and set before them the character of the service which He expected of them. In a certain sense it was all outlined and adumbrated in His early utterances, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount; but it was afterwards that He slowly brought them to understand the deeper and hidden meaning of these things. It was only when His ministry was drawing to its close that He began to speak fully of the doctrine of

sacrifice and to prepare them for the surprising revelation which His own humiliation and Cross would afford. He kept them out of the shadow of the Cross until the time was near, because their feebleness could not have borne the darkness of that shadow before. And it was only when He had bound them to Himself in absolute devotion, and given them some experience in enduring hardship, that He ventured to represent His service as a cross-bearing, and showed them how great things they would have to suffer for His name's sake. Then He required of them a love greater than they had ever given to father, mother, brother, or wife; then He told them that they must lose and hate their very selves for Him; and then He boldly forewarned them of the tribulation which awaited them, and how they would be hated of all men for His name's sake. So each day He brought them into more obedience, and wrote His mind and will in their hearts, and shaped His great thoughts in their lives as a sculptor slowly evolves from the shapeless marble his beautiful design.

4. CHRIST'S WORD NOT BOUND

His holy ambition was to make their minds copies of His own. He wished them to grow into the understanding of *all* His thoughts—*them* first; but it was always in order that they should make known *all* His thoughts to others. He took special pains with them, not to give them any monopoly of His teaching, but to make them efficient teachers. There is no esoteric doctrine in the Christian system—one doctrine for the superior minds and a simpler and less complete doctrine for the illiterate and the uninitiated. That belongs to the Buddhist system and the Romish system. It had no place in the purpose of Christ. The leaders of the Romish Church claim the right of withholding from the people such portions of the truth as they are considered unfitted to receive and incapable of comprehending. They have not so learned of Christ. He taught all who came to Him as much as they were willing to receive. He only refused His teachings to those who had ears to hear, but heard not—

to those whose hard hearts were shut against all His approaches. He could not speak in face of obstinate unbelief. He could not cast His pearls before swine or give that which was holy to the dogs. But He gave the Sermon on the Mount or most of it to the crowd of Galilee as well as to the disciples. It was to the common people that He spoke most of His searching and illumining parables. He uttered some of His profoundest thoughts to the questioning Nicodemus, and preached one of His greatest sermons to a sinful, ignorant woman by the well-side. His Gospel was intended to be the people's Gospel, equally free in all its parts to all. But He instructed the disciples more fully in all the deeper meaning of His teachings, that through their fuller comprehension they might be better fitted to make them known. To them He interpreted His parables in private; to them He explained the hard things which others heard and were not anxious to understand. To them He spoke in confidential intercourse in many a retired place and in that upper

chamber and afterwards where His final and most beautiful words were uttered. His desire was that they should know Him thoroughly: "All that the Father hath given Me, I have made known unto you." Yet not a thought or word was to be their private property. The light shone more fully on them to make them clearer light-givers: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the housetops." "As the Father hath sent Me, so have I sent you. Go ye, and teach all nations to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded *you*." It was their own, yet not their own; for it was all to be shared out freely.

Thus they grew under His teaching in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, as St. Peter expresses it, and were slowly fitted to become His messengers and interpreters.

5. LABORATORY LESSONS

Once at least He interrupted the course of His teaching to help on their training in

another way. He sent them out on an experimental missionary journey. It was intended to serve many helpful and instructive purposes. First they were to try their prentice hand at preaching—to repeat to others the truths which they had been for long time drinking in from His lips. He knew that in teaching them to others these truths would become more deeply engraven on their own minds and more clearly understood. For in our giving out of divine truth it always comes back to us multiplied. Moreover, He wished to give them a foretaste of work done, without His visible presence, and without His face and voice to cheer them—work of the kind which they would have to do all through life when He was gone. He wished to inure them a little by the hardships, difficulties, and rejections which they would encounter; and perhaps above all He purposed by means of this journey to inspire them with greater confidence in His power and in the virtue of His Name; for they were entrusted with some of His power, and commissioned to use

His name with effect in healing the sick and casting out devils. All this was needful. For the preaching gift comes by preaching, and power is acquired by the exercise of it, and the mastery of one's weapons by using them. The preparation of these men would have been deficient if they had remained always sitting at the Master's feet receiving. The coming Apostles must have a little practice in the Apostle's duties. The Master, who forgot nothing, did not omit to give His young eagles their trial flight. He flung them out of the nest for a moment to test their wings. In all things He led them gently on to the higher places of service and enlightenment.

6. HIS MASTER-PERSONALITY

Yet the most effective part of their training was supplied, not by what they did or even by what He taught, but by what He was, and by their half-unconscious yielding to the charms of His personality. In their daily intercourse with Him they saw and

felt what became to them an enlarging, renewing, and transforming power. Walking in the spiritual light which His presence diffused, their faces began to shine like the face of Moses when he had been with God, and wist not that the shining had remained. Slowly they were transfigured before Him. Two disciples who committed their thoughts about Him to writing, Peter and John, have borne emphatic witness to the impression which His life produced upon them: "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth"; "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (John i. 14; 1 John i. 2); "We were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory" (2 Pet. i. 16). That fact of which St. Paul testifies of all believers was emphatically true of those first followers of Jesus: "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image

from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The more they saw of Him the more they loved Him, and in proportion to their love was His image reproduced in them. Everything that He did and was made them sensible of their own defects, and set them striving unconsciously in the way of His example. He drew them with the cords of love and the bands of a man, and, ere ever they were aware of it, they found themselves doing and thinking after the pattern which He had showed. His gentleness softened them. His condescension drew them into humility. His compassions and healing touches and tears taught them pity and sympathy. His promptness to forgive, His kindness to the fallen, slowly cleansed them from their hard and unrelenting feelings. His utter self-forgetting rebuked their vanities and envyings, and presently made them ashamed of their petty strifes for pre-eminence. His great and disinterested thoughts revealed to them the littleness of their own egotisms and prejudices until these weaknesses disappeared

in a sort of judgment light. And even His intense hatred of sin and His wrath against the hypocrite and confirmed wrong-doer was a fire which kindled in them the same righteous burning. Every hour they passed in His company, every look from His searching eyes, every movement of His hand as it was stretched forth to heal, gave them another lesson which was sometimes more impressive and more abiding than His words. His whole personality, actions, and attitudes taught them something more of His perfect grace and wisdom, of His wonderful goodness and ineffable beauty. He became to them all in all, so that they felt they could sit at His feet for ever, and that to be like Him would be to have reached very heaven. And thus in watching Him they were refined and expanded, and made every day other larger souls. It was the Teacher even more than the things taught who made them at length men after His own heart, and vessels fit to carry the divine treasure.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRUNING AND GRAFTING OF THE DISCIPLES

1. THE MASTER'S OWN FIGURE

THE Master Himself used these figures to describe the training and growth of the men whom He had chosen. They had been grafted into Him and had become branches of the living Vine. They were to draw all their moral and spiritual sustenance from Him, and to be strengthened in the inner man by participation in His life. In so far as they abode in Him and He in them, they would bring forth fruit and be equal to all the demands which were made upon them, and without Him they were and could do nothing. At the same time He intimated that the branches which were thus united to Him would need much pruning or purging; for they had developed no little unlovely

and unhealthy growths, which must be cleared away by rough and unsparing handling before they could bring forth the fruit which He desired. This was the twofold discipline of confirming and correcting, which He set forth in one of His most memorable discourses, and which had been His purpose with these men from the beginning. They needed to be purged, not only, as we have already seen, from prejudices and errors, but from wrong and extravagant notions of themselves, and to be taught their own weakness and insufficiency and foolishness, before the real secret of their strength could be revealed to them. He led them through humblings to their true exaltation, and made them poor in spirit in order to enrich them with the spirit of might and grace.

2. THE UNDOING OF THEIR SELF-CONCEIT

They all needed to be shown and convinced that their strength was in Him. The more modest of them required that lesson to save them from the timidity and cowardice

of excessive self-distrust; and those who were not overdone with modesty required it still more to bring them into proper subjection to His rule, and to save them from the blunders and possible falls which are always waiting on the road that pride and self-conceit take. And some of these disciples at the beginning, and even for a long time after the beginning, had a considerable stock of that youthful folly. They did not always remember that it was "His gentleness which had made them great," and that He had chosen them, not because of any works of righteousness which they had done, or because He discerned in them extraordinary gifts and merits, but that He might magnify His grace in very unworthy subjects. They had not yet risen to the self-depreciating thought expressed in the words of St. Paul: "We have this treasure in *earthen* vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their aspirations were often the outcome of vanity rather than the offspring of holy desire and spiritual illumination. Their vulgar ambition

to fill great places indicated an almost ludicrous belief in their own importance, and proved that, whatever else they had learned so far, they had singularly failed to take a proper estimate of themselves. That strife among themselves for pre-eminence, of which we often read, shows that they had hardly acquired yet the rudiments of humility and charity. It was to them especially, and not only to the labouring and heavy-laden multitude, that Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart." It was a long time before the meekness and lowliness of the Saviour entered into these men and brought them rest. It is evident, also, that they claimed no little credit for themselves, from the fact that they had been willing to undertake the service of Jesus. It took them some time to understand that He had conferred amazing grace and dignity upon them by calling them to the ministry, and treating them as companions and friends rather than servants. They talked at times as if He were their debtor more than their benefactor.

There was a certain vain-glorious tone in those words which Peter spoke when the rich young man went away sorrowful, refusing to make the great surrender: "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee! What shall we have therefore?" We may be thankful that he was betrayed into that unseemly boast, for the Saviour gently rebuked it in one of His sweetest parables; but it showed all too plainly the exaggerated notion which the disciples had formed of their own value and of the largeness of the sacrifice which they had made for Him.

All these vain imaginations and high thoughts were to be cast down and brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ before He could employ these men in the pulling down of strongholds. Their real power would come when they leaned not upon their own understanding, but lost all self-sufficiency in a whole-hearted belief in Him. He was constantly endeavouring to bring them to this attitude of mind. *He* was to increase in them, and *self* was to decrease. That was something like His meaning when,

on one memorable occasion, He explained their failure to cast out an evil spirit from a demoniac: "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." They had failed because they had trusted too much in themselves and too little in the higher power which prayer brings, and they had failed because the ambition to do a big thing and exalt themselves had been too prominent in the attempt. There was need of that kind of fasting which lowers and starves carnal pride before they could grapple with the evil spirits in others. They must be made to feel that they were nothing and the Master all in all. Many and many a time did Jesus softly let them down, and cut their wings when they were soaring not wisely. It was done with the utmost gentleness. He did not smite their self-conceit with the sword of His mouth—He rather shamed them out of it by tender appeals, sweet corrective pictures, and exhibitions of His own humility. Nothing could be more beautiful, and at the same time more effective, than the scene in which He made a little child their school-

master, and settled their dispute about the foremost position by telling them that a little child was greater than the greatest of them. And almost more striking as an object lesson was that never-to-be-forgotten incident at the last supper, when, knowing that their thoughts had been busy again with the oft-renewed contention, He girded Himself with a towel and knelt with surprising lowliness to be servant of all and wash their feet. Lessons of this kind renewed from day to day, and the uniform warnings with which He met every boastful protestation and claim, brought about gradually the desired effect. They learned to measure themselves by the Master's standard, to judge themselves more truly in the Master's light, and to understand the truth which He patiently drilled into them, that "whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased."

3. THE IMPARTING OF A NOBLER CONFIDENCE

But that was only half His task. The grafting was as necessary as the pruning,

even more necessary—in fact, the one was done chiefly to make the other possible. If He sought to wound and crucify and destroy the false *ego* in them, it was in order that a nobler *ego* should replace it. He wished to root and ground them in Himself, so that while they lost self-confidence they also gained it in an immeasurably higher form. He wished to set them ascending on “stepping-stones of their dead selves” to a consciousness of the diviner power which they had through Him. In fact, it was all intended to produce in them that condition of mind which was beautifully expressed by the Apostle of the Gentiles: “Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

It was not to make them fearful of themselves that He chided their presumption. It was not to diminish their boldness, or take anything from their natural courage. His purpose was the very opposite of this. It was to deliver them from the spirit of

fear, and to give them the spirit of love, power, and a sound mind. He did not wish to have timid and irresolute men following Him—hesitating over every step, distrustful of their weapons, afraid to use their opportunities, and letting “I dare not wait upon I would”—but men whose indecisions were swallowed up in perfect trust, and who had an assured belief in themselves because they had a supreme belief in the Master and in the possibilities of faith. Indeed, it was the singular and unique beauty of Christ’s method to save men by lifting them up and setting them on their feet. He began by inspiring them with confidence and infusing into them self-respect. The sick, the sinful, and the lost whom He had to do with were generally hopeless and despairing men. They had given themselves up; they had written themselves down as useless waste; they had abandoned all belief in better things. Jesus bade them believe in God, that they might recover belief in themselves. He assured them of the unlimited possibilities of better things which were in them—slumbering, but

not dead—which faith would bring out and make mighty. He encouraged them to attempt things which seemed impossible—“Stretch out the paralysed hand,” “Take up thy bed and walk”—because the power to do it would come with faith’s endeavour. And He was constantly repeating the cheery words: “If thou canst believe,” “All things are possible to him that believeth.”

It was that uplifting and inspiring thought which He was continually impressing upon the disciples. If He sought to empty them of the spurious greatness which vanity had begotten, it was not to lower and degrade them in their own eyes, but to show them the real greatness which faith would put within their reach. If they overrated their abilities and powers in one direction, He was constantly reminding them that they had strength and sufficiency in God of which they were only dimly and vaguely conscious. He was ever assuring them that they were not less men, but greater, than their own estimate of themselves, or at least that they might, would, and should be through their

faith in God and Him. He never pulled them up for attempting too much, though egotism might be conspicuous in the attempt; but He often chided them for attempting too little. He sometimes overlooked and silently forgave the most audacious presumption, lest a reproving word should discourage the bold venturesomeness which He wished to develop in them. He met the ambitious request of the sons of Zebedee, not with the stern rebuke which perhaps it deserved, but with the solemn and kindly assurance that they should be able to drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism. He encouraged Peter to walk upon the sea, though that venture was probably undertaken quite as much in arrogance as in faith; and when the attempt ignominiously failed, the Saviour had no word except a word of mingled pity and approval: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

To the seventy disciples who came back from their journey somewhat boastfully reporting that even the devils were subject

unto them through His name, He gave an answer which, in its final word, turned their proud thoughts into a humbler channel: "Rejoice not in your own successes, as if *you* had wrought them, but rather in the heavenly grace which has enrolled you in its service." But, thoroughly approving the courage and determination which had carried them through their mission, He prefaced that with magnificent words of promise to incite them to other and larger enterprises. "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." These words were indeed spoken to the wider circle of disciples; but words of a similar kind, and perhaps these very words, were addressed to the Twelve. He was always repeating to them the promise which He gave in one of His farewell utterances, or at least the substance of it: "These signs shall follow them, that believe. In My name they shall cast out devils, and speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents; and if they

drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

And He expressed virtually the same thought in another place: "Ye believe in God; ye believe also in me:" that is enough; that will give you the proper belief in yourselves, and make you able to face, do, and endure all things. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Thus the pruning and the grafting went on together. He took away the confidence which had no real strength, staying power, and vitality, and He gave them another confidence, built up on Him, which no fears and difficulties could shake. He showed them that, left to themselves, they were weaker than bruised reeds, but that by His strengthening might they would be victorious over all things. Trusting in themselves, they would be mere playthings in the hands of the world and the prince of the world. Trusting in Him, and united to Him, they could march through and tread down all opposing forces. By faith they could move

mountains—faithless they would run at the sound of a driven leaf or a maid-servant's gibes. Without Him they could do nothing, but abiding in Him there was hardly anything which they could not do.

CHAPTER XV

TRANSFORMATION PICTURES.

1. THE SLOW REMAKING.

THE remaking of these men was not the work of a day. To a superficial student of them there is little perceptible growth. He finds ever recurring the same ineptitudes, the same misunderstandings and presumptuous follies, the same inability to read the Master's purpose, and the same childish forgetfulness of lessons often taught. Nothing but exhaustless patience could produce a perfect work here, and the Master's patience had no limits. It was a divine exemplification of the prophet's words, "He that believeth shall not make haste." And we may well believe that it suggested Peter's words, "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." And yet, though the new life and character came to the disciples with lingering feet—

came, as a late spring-time comes, with disappointing delays, and with many a bleak return of winter mocking the promise of genial airs—the change was most surely coming, with its enlarged world, expanded minds, and clearer visions. As we watch the men closely, we see that His labour has not been in vain. We can see His mind dimly reflected in their minds. Occasionally their faces are for a moment beautiful in the light which falls upon them. They are slowly taking shape in the hands of this most cunning Workman; and as we follow them in His company, we are reminded of the words which are written of the first of Israel's kings, "There went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."

2. OBSERVATION OF MORAL GROWTH

It is almost impossible to measure moral growth from day to day. It can only be done when we allow an interval of time. We watch the waves by the sea-shore, and for a moment, as they advance and then

recede, we hardly know whether the tide is flowing in or on the ebb; but then we mentally mark some rock which is now high and dry above the waters, and in an hour's time or less find it submerged. There is no more question about the inflowing tide. And such marks are given us to show that the spirit of life in Christ Jesus was gathering strength in the men who accompanied with Him.

3. THE TWO MIRACULOUS DRAUGHTS OF FISHES

One of the most significant of these measuring-marks is supplied by the two stories which are told of a miraculous draught of fishes. The two stories have so close a resemblance in certain features that superficial critics have pronounced them accounts of the same incident chronologically misplaced; but the differences are greater than the similarities, and make an impressive contrast. There was an interval of three years between the two miracles. One was

done in the early stage of His ministry, and in connection with the decisive calling of the disciples. The other had place after His resurrection, and when His work upon them had been brought far towards completion. They found themselves then in almost exactly the same position and surroundings as when their discipleship commenced. It was the same shore from which they launched their ship. It was possibly the same ship and the same nets. Many of the incidents were repeated. Each time they had toiled all night and caught nothing. Each time the morning brought the Master after the long night's discouraging labour. Again, as at the first, they let down their nets at His bidding. And on each occasion there was the same wonderful result—a great multitude of fishes. All these outward things were the same. Yet the deeper things were all changed and new. The Master had been transformed in their eyes. His words of command had another meaning. They heard Him with willing ears. They looked on Him with glad and loving eyes. They

themselves had grown into other, larger men. In the first miracle they obeyed His word, but reluctantly, and with no expectation of results. They had not learned to trust Him, and had no belief in His power. In the first miracle the result brought them no satisfaction. It filled them with an exceeding great dread. Their sins rose up against them in judgment. The presence of Jesus was terrible, and they wished to get away from Him. Nay, their very nets were breaking and their ships sinking, as if to show that they were not yet able to receive and appropriate the Master's gifts, and were far from being what He intended to make them—successful fishers of men. They had not been with Him those three years for nought. Now they obey His word with prompt alacrity. Their trust has no hesitation or misgivings. He has drilled them into the soldiership which is ready to do anything or go anywhere at His command. Now the shivering dread of Him has entirely disappeared. Peter, who before cried out, "Depart from me," leaps into the sea to

get to his Lord a little sooner. And their nets hold together, though they are so full. They will be able to go fishing for men now.

We might almost believe, indeed, that these two miracles were wrought and the accounts of them carefully preserved to prove first to the disciples themselves and then to us how greatly these men had felt and yielded to the spell of the Master's influence, and how much they had already received out of His fulness. To pass from one picture to the other is a transfiguration scene.

4. INCREASE OF TRUST IN HIM

The change in spirit, temper, and fitness which we have thus seen illustrated appears in other ways and scenes. We have many proofs that their trust in Him and their clinging attachment to Him were continually being strengthened. In the earlier period of their service they drop words occasionally which seem to indicate that they were not always sure they had done a wise thing in

following Him. At times they went after Him in the way, wondering and fearing, questioning within themselves, and perhaps a little tempted to go back. The Saviour, not without meaning, bade them "remember Lot's wife," and He must have discerned some signs of irresolution when He asked them, "Will ye also go away?" Peter answered for them all in a sufficiently decisive way, as if the question had suggested a hideous possibility from which they had been mercifully saved; and probably from that time they were never tempted again until the hour of passing madness came—when they all forsook Him and fled. There was no hesitation in their loyalty as the closing scenes approached. He looked into all their hearts as they sat at the supper-table, and declared that they needed only to have their feet washed—that they were clean except there—by which He plainly meant that their devotion to Him was whole and true. And when they made their final protestations of fidelity, there is no doubt they were speaking what they had increasingly

felt—that their attachment to Him had become dearer than life.

5. FROM LOYALTY TO LOVE

Loyalty, in fact, had grown with love. And that word suggests another change which had been slowly, but effectually, wrought in them. There had been little love in their early discipleship. Strong and deep emotions had been aroused in them from the very beginning of their intercourse with Him; but this deepest and divinest emotion was kept, like the best wine, for the end. They gave Him the worship of admiration, wonder, awe, and reverence. They were afraid of Him. They recoiled from His mighty works; they trembled at the manifold mystery in Him which they could not understand; they were overpowered by His greatness before they were subdued by the infinite sweetness of His condescension and pity, and every new experience into which He led them found them in the mood described in the Transfiguration story: “they feared as they entered

into the cloud." Again and again we read of the great fear and amazement which came over them. And that fear had a torment which made confiding love impossible. And yet one great purpose of His training was to inspire them with love. That was to supply the very soul of obedience and the furnace fire of all their energy. Day by day He was insisting that love must be the mainspring of their motives and actions; that discipleship, indeed, meant love; and that unless they loved Him more than father and mother, and better than their own lives, they could not be His disciples. Day by day He was repeating that lesson in deeds more convincing than the sweetest words. His tender care of them, His almost tearful solicitude, His gentle nursing and unfailing forgiveness, brought home to them the fact that never had friend or mother loved as their Master loved them. Love was the light in which they walked and the atmosphere which they breathed, and they could not fail to open their hearts to His love, and in receiving give Him back something of His own again.

We see them manifestly growing into His great, dear thought. His final discourses, recorded by St. John, assume throughout that they had learned obedience through the way of love—that the great inspiring force had at length taken hold of them; and in all the farewell words and closing scenes love is everywhere uppermost. Their heart-breaking grief at His departure, their desolation and despair in His absence, and their wonderful joy when He reappears prove all that Peter said concerning them all: “Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee.” And St. John was unconsciously summing up and expressing in one word the story of their transition from reverent dread to holy, restful affection, when he wrote, “Perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

6. ENLARGEMENT OF VIEWS CONCERNING HIS PERSON

Equally conspicuous is the enlargement of their views concerning His person. What

He for a time purposely hid from them was discovered in spite of the hiding. As they walked with Him and their eyes were opened, He grew into Godlikeness and surprised them by His divinity. At a certain period of His ministry there seems to have been a measure of doubt in all their minds about His very Messiahship. The early witness of John the Baptist and the scenes at our Lord's baptism had lost something of their force. The Baptist himself showed, by the question which he sent to Jesus from prison, that his own certainty had been shaken; and that question well expressed the hesitation of the disciples. There was a stage in which they knew not what to think. Jesus was well aware of this when, at Cæsarea Philippi, He asked the memorable question, "Who do men say that I am?" And this widespread doubt which had affected the disciples made the significance of Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Flesh and blood had not told him that. It was, as Jesus said, a direct revelation to Peter from the Father. It was a flash of

illumination which anticipated the assured certainty of all the disciples at a later date. It marked a great advance in their conceptions. And yet that they knew Him only in part and darkly, even after this confession, is shown in the incident which immediately followed on the Mount of Transfiguration, when they proposed to build three tabernacles for Moses, Elias, and their Master. Evidently they had not risen above the thought that Jesus was a prophet of the same order and standing as those two ancient seers. And the same crude idea appeared even more forcibly a little later, when two of them proposed that He should call down destroying fire as Elias did. They looked upon Him still as either some Elias risen from the dead or a prophet of the same spirit and degree. The light which they had was still dusky twilight. At the last supper Peter proves very decisively that the greatness of their Lord has vastly grown upon him, and perhaps upon the rest, by his indignant refusal to have his feet washed, and the subsequent cry of humility and conscious unworthiness :

“Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head.” In that request there is not only a confession of uncleanness, but a conception of Jesus as a sin-cleansing and regenerating power. And, finally, in the exclamation of Thomas there is a still higher reach of knowledge and adoration. Some of them at least, if not all, have risen at last to the conception of His Godhead: “My Lord and my God.” He had still many things to say unto them which they could not bear yet, but they were evidently being prepared for all that was to be revealed.

7. THEIR GROWING TENDERNESS AND LOVE FOR EACH OTHER

And we see finally, even before they were baptized into a larger life by the Holy Ghost, how His gentle teachings about forgiveness and brotherly love and serving one another had slowly filtered through their minds, and cleansed them from hard, unloving, selfish, and wrangling thoughts. Peter after his shameful fall takes his leading place in the

company again. There is no distrust. They seem all to have forgiven him as completely as the Master. They have left the time a long way behind when they thought it well-nigh impossible to forgive seven times, and they have left all their disputes and rivalries behind also, for one of the last things recorded of the whole company is that they were of one accord, and that saying is repeated with emphasis. "They were *all* of one accord," as if the imperfect, unworthy past had been blotted out, and the Master had opened a new page in their lives by the victory of His own peace-making, self-forgetting love, in them.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COMPLETION OF THEIR PREPARATION

1. ILLUMINATION FROM THE CROSS

THE training of the disciples had to be finished in a way which no one could have anticipated except the Master Himself. When His ministry was drawing to a close, and He had spoken all those searching and comforting farewell words which St. John records, they were still far from being fitted for the work which He designed for them. They had seen something of His beauty, and caught even passing glimpses of His glory, but His deepest thoughts were still hidden from them, and the great purpose of His life was still unguessed. Though He had been so long time with them, they did not yet know Him. They only saw Him through

a glass darkly. It was necessary that He should lead them through paths of darkness into clearer light, and that the veil which hung upon their eyes should be removed by a blow which for the time being shattered all their hopes. The way of the Cross was to be to them, as it has been to others, the way of illumination and fuller life.

2. THE HIGHER MEANING OF THE KINGDOM

In the first place, nothing short of His death would have shaken and overthrown their fixed idea about His earthly kingship. To the last, in spite of all His warnings and assertions to the contrary, they had clung to the belief that He would establish His rule by force, after the manner of the world's monarchs, and that He would prove Himself the kind of Messiah which the Jewish nation looked for. All the teachings about meekness and patience and non-resistance, which ought to have disabused their minds of this expectation, had been lost upon them or misinterpreted. He had been con-

tinually pointing them to a kingdom which was not of this world—a kingdom of truth built up by love, pity, and cross-bearing; but they could not understand. That new great thought was too great and too spiritual for them to entertain. The old conception stubbornly held its ground, and could not be dislodged. When Peter drew his sword and used it at the betrayal scene, it was just the outcome of this deep-rooted thought; and when all His disciples forsook Him and fled, it was chiefly because His quiet yielding to His enemies had shattered their rude conceptions and destroyed their confidence. It is significant that when He appeared to them again after the Resurrection their thoughts were still revolving around the old error. For they asked Him, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” so obstinately did they cling to the carnal and secular view of His work.

Nothing short of that Calvary scene with all its horror and humiliation would have sufficed to show them that they were building false hopes on a false foundation. Their

material kingdom was overthrown by His death and buried in His grave, yet for a moment they believed that it had risen again with His rising, and it needed His final ascension and departure to kill it effectually once more, and turn their thoughts towards a fairer and diviner kingdom of spiritual truth and beauty.

3. WHEN THE MYSTERY WAS FINISHED

Moreover, they needed these final scenes of His life—the tragedy of the Cross and the triumph of the Resurrection—to furnish them with the weapons of their warfare, and supply the message which they were to deliver to the world. They could not understand, until they had witnessed these things, what was the real character of His attractive, subduing, and saving power, and what His redemptive purpose meant. His death alone revealed to them His priesthood and that sacrificial part of His work which was the greatest part, and His resurrection proved that His priesthood had

been confirmed and His atonement invested with everlasting efficacy. In fact, they had no gospel to preach until He died and rose again to give them a gospel. So far as we can follow their after-preaching, these two facts furnished both the text and substance of it. They dwelt comparatively little upon His life, ministry, healings, and teachings, and laid perpetual emphasis upon His death and resurrection. He had given them the saving facts. He had shown them what was to be their witness in the world. He had shod their feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.

4. THE LAST TOUCH

But He had not yet finished with them. They were not yet provided with the sword of the Spirit. St. Luke tells us (xxiv. 49) that the very last command which He gave them prior to His ascension was an order to wait and stand still: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." When He had

spoken that, He blessed them, promised to be with them alway to the end of the world, and then vanished out of their sight. It was like a general's order to halt. He had brought them to the verge of their battlefield, shown the conflict which awaited them, and given their marching orders; but they were not yet prepared to advance. It might have appeared to ordinary eyes that all things were now ready. They had been drilled and trained for three years; their instructions were complete. They were in possession of all the truths they were to teach, and all the saving facts to which they were to bear witness. Nothing apparently was wanting to their full equipment—nothing at least which human eyes could see and human minds judge. And yet He held them back. For the main thing was wanting, without which all the rest would be ineffective—that something invisible, spiritual, and divine which is beyond human reckoning. In truth, the weapons were in their hands, but not the might to wield them. The vessels were ready, but they were not

yet charged with the spiritual forces. The machinery was there, but not the furnace fire to move it and make it thrill and throb with life. There was everything except the one indispensable thing, and hence this order was given to tarry until they should be endued with power from on high.

5. THE GIFT OF FIRE

The first chapter in the Acts tells us briefly in what way they obeyed the order. They waited, meeting often together and continuing in earnest supplication. The tarrying was not long, no more than ten days. The power came according to the promise, in answer to unceasing prayer. It came in an hour unlooked for, and in a way totally unexpected. Not one of them could have explained how it came or what it was. Unseen, intangible, mysterious, and mighty, above all thought inexpressible and unimaginable. They could only call it "the power of the Holy Ghost." But the effects of it were grand and immeasurable. They

were creative and all-transforming. It set everything within them and about them on fire—fire which consumed the littleness, weakness, cowardice, and selfishness which still remained. It flooded their world with heavenly light. It opened their eyes to see the full beauty and glory of their now absent Lord. It brought back to memory and interpreted anew the things which He had done and taught. It filled their heart, mind, and whole being with new emotions, fervours, and passions—with faith, energy, courage, and devotion—with love, pity, persuasiveness, and convincing utterance. The change which it wrought in them was amazing then, and has been amazing ever since. Never was a transformation and re-creation more complete. The old life seemed to pass away with its timidity, small views, cramping prejudices, and dulness of vision, and to be replaced by a larger other self, strong, brave, fearless, tender, sympathetic, enlightened, Christ-like, endowed with breadth of view, elevation of purpose, and intensity of zeal and love. It was almost the greatest miracle they had

witnessed, and it was a miracle wrought on themselves.

6. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE APOSTLES

We are permitted to see the striking result of it in Peter. Peter, boldly challenging the magistrates and in the name of Jesus fearlessly defying them and all that they can do, is another man from the weak, faithless coward who a short time before had trembled at a maid-servant's reproaches and basely denied his Lord. God has given Him another heart and taken away the heart of flesh.

And if we knew all the facts, we should doubtless see the same transfigured life and magnified mind and purpose in the whole of them. The materialism of Philip is spiritualised. The Elijah-temper in James and John is softened and refined into the sweetness of Jesus' mind. The retiredness of Andrew puts on a holy boldness. The pessimism of Thomas gives place to a resolute cheerfulness and a brave optimism. They are all new

men. At last the poor earthen vessels have received the divine treasure in its fulness and power, and can carry it to the world. At last they have been made fit to be the chosen messengers of His kingdom and grace.

7. THE GOSPEL FOR ALL RACES

And yet one thing more had to be added—one more gift of enlightenment—before they could rise to that wider conception of the Saviour's kingdom which had always been in the Saviour Himself. He had told them often and in many ways that, though He had been sent first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, His saving purpose extended to all the peoples on the earth. In His earlier ministry He had spoken of the whole world as the field in which He was to sow the seed of the kingdom. He had predicted the coming of men from north, south, east, and west to sit down in the kingdom of God. He had drawn the picture of a judgment day on which all nations would be gathered before Him. He had declared that

by His lifting up on the cross He would draw all men unto Him; and one of His parting injunctions to the disciples was, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." His meaning in all these and other words seems unmistakable to *us*. But the words had fallen on dull and unwilling minds. The disciples had not grasped them, mainly because they were reluctant to receive them. They could not easily let go the proud and fondly cherished notion of the Jews, that the Messiah belonged exclusively to the chosen people. They could not bring themselves to believe that the wall between the elect and the uncircumcised was to be broken down, and no difference recognised between the children of the Covenant and the dogs of the Gentiles. Even the enlightenment of the day of Pentecost did not open their minds fully to the grand comprehensiveness of Christ's thought and the universal sweep of God's redeeming grace.

They needed a further revelation. It was

given in a special vision granted to Peter in respect of Cornelius, which led to the first baptism of a Gentile convert. That vision and its consequences were a great historical event. They marked the opening of the outside world to Christ, the breaking down of every race-distinction and separating barrier by His universal truth and love, and the expansion of Christianity from a natural and sectarian faith into a religion of humanity and the world. In that vision Peter, and through Him the rest of the disciples, saw their beloved Master still further magnified into the world's Saviour and the life and light of all men.

One little remnant or rag of the old haughty prejudice clung still. The heavenly vision had not swept that away. The disciples thought that though Gentiles might come in they must come through a Jewish door. They must be circumcised. In fact, they must first become Jews in order to become Christians. The Jewish pride died hard, and died protesting even in these wonderfully wise and sanctified men. And

the Lord raised up another Apostle to slay it—St. Paul. That great servant of the Lord was chosen and sent to give this finishing touch to the Lord's training of the Twelve, and to make them completely equipped in every thought and purpose for their world-wide witness.

PART FOURTH
AFTER-STUDIES

CHAPTER XVII

THE LATER LIVES OF THE APOSTLES

1. THE INCOMPLETE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

“THESE twelve Jesus sent forth,” and of the major part of them we never hear again. No sooner was their training finished and their actual work begun than they are dropped entirely out of the record, leaving us wondering what became of them. All the disciples, save the one who had committed the great infamy and forfeited his place, are enumerated by name for the last time in Acts i. 13. They meet in the upper room for prayer, and they proceed to elect by lot a successor to Judas. They are together again on the day of Pentecost, and then, with three notable exceptions, they disappear from our view, and we see them no more.

The book which we call “The Acts of the

Apostles" is strangely misnamed. It ought rather to be called "The Beginnings, Growth, and Expansion of the Church." The early chapters are devoted to the formation and increase of the Church in Jerusalem, in which Peter and John seem to take the principal part. We have an account of the experiment in Christian socialism or community of goods, which led to some not very happy results. Then follows the multiplication of poor and destitute believers, and the appointment of deacons to deal with them. After that comes the graphic recital of the persecution in which the proto-martyr Stephen suffered, and the Jerusalem saints were scattered abroad through all Judæa and Samaria. From that time even the most prominent of the Twelve are withdrawn into the background, and the main work was carried on by one who had not belonged to their company, the Apostle who speaks of himself as "one born out of due time"; but whom *we* think of now as the greatest of the Apostles. The second and the far larger part of the "Acts" is devoted almost exclu-

sively to the conversion, calling, labours, and missionary journeys of St. Paul.

2. JAMES

Concerning the three original Apostles who are mentioned in the book, we have a little definite information, in one instance from the book alone, and in the other instances from additional and independent sources. James the brother of John was speedily to be baptized with that baptism of which Jesus had spoken, and which he had avowed his willingness to suffer. His short service was terminated by the brutal hand of Herod (Acts xii. 2), and he was enrolled with Stephen in the noble army of martyrs, the first of the Twelve to bear his bleeding witness and to be restored to the presence of the Lord.

3. PETER

We follow Peter for a while, and see him continually active in Jerusalem. He is the

leading spirit in the aggressive work of the Church there. Through his preaching multitudes of converts are made. His boldness and activity draw upon him the fierce opposition of the Jewish priests and council, and later on involve him in Herod's persecution. He is more than once imprisoned, and is only saved from the fate of James by the delivering hand of an angel (Acts xii. 7). By him, as we have already seen, the great decisive step was taken of baptizing and admitting to the Church the first Gentile converts (Acts x.), and subsequently, at a meeting of the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem summoned to confer with Paul and Barnabas, he defended and carried to its logical issue that divine policy, by the memorable declaration that Gentile converts should not be required to submit to circumcision and the ritual law of Moses. He carried the assembly with him and established for ever that great principle of Christian liberty, which in Paul's hands became a powerful weapon for the extension of the Gospel. And with this momentous and

fruit-bearing action he drops out of the history.

We learn, however, from St. Paul (Gal. ii. 11) that many years later Peter was at Antioch, and that the two Apostles had a brotherly dispute on the old question of the Gentile converts, which, though apparently settled once for all by the conference in Jerusalem, was continually revived again by the determined prejudice of certain Hebrew Christians who came to be known as Judaisers. Peter at Antioch is not seen at his best. The weakness which had once involved him in a shameful fall reappears in a very modified form, and betrays him into an act of unworthy compromise. To please the Judaisers he withdraws himself from communion with the uncircumcised Christians. It was only a momentary vacillation, and at Paul's well-deserved rebuke, which was taken in a becoming way, he repents of his yielding and becomes himself again. Some draw the inference from his First Epistle, written from "Babylon," that he was busy in the region of the

Euphrates. From the fact that he addresses the letter to Christians scattered over various provinces of Western Asia, whom he seems to know, it appears he had made missionary journeys there. It is probable, also, from the existence of a party which bore his name in Corinth, that he had visited Greece. Beyond that our knowledge does not go. The tradition which locates his later days at Rome, and makes him first bishop of the Roman Church, has a very slender foundation, and certainly no sufficient authority. It is in the highest degree probable that it was conjectured or invented to support the claim to primacy made by subsequent bishops of Rome, which gradually developed into the arrogant pretensions of the Papacy. There is a more trustworthy tradition that he suffered martyrdom in a comparatively old age, being crucified with his head downward; and so he passed to his reward. But where that final witness was given it doth not yet appear.

One tradition, which Clement records in his *Miscellanies*, is worth repeating here for

its exceeding beauty, and because it well agrees with what we know of the man: "That the blessed Peter, on seeing his wife led to death, rejoiced on account of her call and conveyance home, and called very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, 'Remember thou the Lord.'" It is good to learn from that touching incident that Peter and the wife otherwise all unknown to us were worthy of each other, and married in the Lord.

4. JOHN

His dear friend and fellow-disciple John is only referred to twice in the history. The two men are found in close conjunction in the scene before the Jewish Council, and in the incident of the miraculous healing which led to it (Acts iii. and iv.). Peter is the more prominent actor and spokesman in the scenes, but they both distinguish themselves by the boldness and courage with which they defy the magistrates and face imprisonment and threatenings. We find

them together again in Samaria, whither they had been sent by their fellow-disciples to confirm the faith of the newly made converts there, and to support Philip the deacon in the great evangelising work which he was doing (Acts viii. 14). Seventeen or eighteen years later John was still labouring with other Apostles at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 9), and there is little doubt that he continued there, at least until the mother of our Lord was called to rest, and the charge which Jesus had committed to him was fulfilled. From that time we have no certain knowledge of his movements, except what we gain from the Apocalypse.

In the Apocalypse he tells us that he was in the island of Patmos when heaven was opened to him, and the visions were vouchsafed which he describes. He had been sent thither "for the testimony of Jesus Christ," or, in other words, he had been banished to that island prison for the faith's sake. The time is uncertain, but it was probably in the persecution of Domitian, when he would be comparatively advanced in years. We

learn, moreover, from his letters to the seven Greek churches of Asia, that he had an intimate knowledge of them, which could only have been gained by a sojourn among them, and this agrees with a universally accepted tradition that he was for a long time bishop of Ephesus, and that during his residence there he wrote both his gospel and the epistles. This must have been some time after the death of St. Paul, because, when that Apostle on the eve of martyrdom wrote the last of his pastoral epistles, Timothy was the pastor or bishop of the Ephesian church.

The stories which are told of him are manifold; but it is difficult to decide whether they grew out of imagination or fact. It is said that he was condemned to death in Rome, and plunged into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously delivered. It is reported that he was engaged at Ephesus in disputes with the heretic Cerinthus, and once fled from a bath to escape the pollution of that man's presence. Another story, which is much easier to

believe and more in accord with his known temper, is that when he was too old to walk he was carried in a chair to the assembly of Christians, and continually repeated to them the words which are found often in his epistles, "Little children, love one another."

We may certainly assume that he lived to an extreme old age, surviving all the rest of the apostolic company. He lived long enough to feel that the world had become very lonely, with all those whom he had loved best gone, and he lived until he almost sighed for the change which would bring him face to face with the Master again. Christ had predicted of both the brothers that they should be baptized with a painful baptism. The prediction was fulfilled for both, though in very different ways. James passed to his crown of reward by a short, sharp struggle of martyrdom; John lingered on some seventy years longer, toiling, suffering much, tossed and driven about until life became an almost unwelcome burden, and he began to utter that cry often which is

found at the close of the Apocalypse, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

5. APOCRYPHAL STORIES OF OTHER APOSTLES

The rest of the Apostles are lost to us entirely, or if they are seen at all it is in the vague and shadowy land of myth and tradition. There was an apocryphal book written by one Leucius, which appeared sometime during the second century, and which attempted to fill up the blank that the inspired records had left. In this book the Apostles are said to have mapped out the different parts of the world in which they were severally to carry on their labours. Philip was sent to Phrygia. Thomas was assigned to India, and reached his sphere of work by being sold as a slave to an Indian merchant. Andrew was appointed to Thracia and Macedonia; and the remainder, in an equally imaginary way, were distributed over other far-off cities and countries. The truth is, we have nothing to build upon but idle romances; and it is better not to build at all,

but simply confess our ignorance, and say that we know not how or where or how long these men bore their witness and filled up their appointed service. One little note alone suggests their missionary journeys. St. Paul tells us (Gal. i. 18) that some three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem and remained fifteen days, and saw none of the Apostles except Peter. It seems reasonable to infer that they were absent from Jerusalem, or he would have surely seen them; and the further inference is that most of them had by this time gone out to different parts evangelising. And we have further the statement at the end of St. Mark's Gospel that "they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them."

6. THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES

We are only made certain by two incidental statements in the inspired records that they did their work faithfully, and that their work, whether small or great, contributed, as Christ had designed, to the firm establishment of the

Church. We read that the Church was built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone—a declaration which recognises the fitting and indispensable part which each one of them took in laying the foundation. And, further, we are told in the Apocalypse (xxi. 14) that the holy city of God—the new Jerusalem which had come down from heaven—had twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. There the names which have dropped out of the story reappear; and there in a beautiful way God's sweet justice is done to the less recognised and less honoured among them. Some of them were undoubtedly far more gifted than others. Some had been regarded as pillars and leaders, and others as followers and lowlier stones. Some had spread themselves out over wider spheres of labour and perhaps gathered a larger harvest for the Master, while others had been limited by their less prominent influence and powers to narrower fields. But they had all shown the same zeal and fidelity. They had all been

distinguished by the same honesty of purpose and entire devotion to the Lord. They had all done the best that was in them for the great cause. And He who judges, not by what His servants accomplish, but by the thoughts and intents of the heart—not by the measure of their success, but by the quality and purpose of their attempts—makes His recognition of them equal at the last. Peter and John are written alongside Jude and James the Less. On the foundation-stones are found without distinction the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES

1. THE QUESTION OF APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

WE can hardly bring our subject to a close without glancing at a question which has been invested with great importance by a large section of the Church, and to which the answer is given by the so-called "Catholic" party at variance with commonly accepted evangelical beliefs.

Had the Apostles the power given to them to appoint successors? Did they exercise that power? And has there been in the Church a long unbroken line of apostolic successors continued in the order of bishops up to the present day? The affirmative answers to these queries constitute the claim of the Romish hierarchy to be the exclusive administrators of the Church and the

dispensers of its gifts, offices, and sacraments—a claim which is advanced with almost equal assurance by a large section of the Anglican communion. It is no part of our business to follow the contention through the uncertain and interminable field of ecclesiastical history. We simply content ourselves with an examination of the inspired records in so far as they bear upon this question.

2. TWO EXTRAMURAL APOSTLES

The first thing that we note is that the number of Apostles in the Church of New Testament times is not strictly confined to twelve. There are, in fact, fourteen to whom that name is distinctly assigned—the original eleven, Matthias (who was elected in the place of Judas), and Paul and Barnabas. Whether the name was given to any other remains in doubt, though the evidence is rather to the contrary, and it seems to be expressly stated that some, like James the Lord's brother, though regarded as pillars in the Church, were not called Apostles (1 Cor.

ix. 5, xv. 7). There are only two, therefore, in addition to Matthias, who are definitely known as bearing the name, and these two were not appointed to the office by the Twelve. They received their calling by the voice of the Church, acting under the direction of the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii. 2), and in the case of Paul by the express choice and summons of the Lord Jesus. It is evident, then, that the Apostles did not as a matter of fact exercise the power of appointing successors, or even of adding to their own number, save in the instance of Matthias.

3. WAS TWELVE THE STANDING NUMBER?

They appear to have felt strongly that the number ought to be twelve and no more. Jesus had fixed the number and given to it a sort of sacredness. It was this thought that led them to fill up the number, when one had fallen out. We read several times afterwards of "the twelve," as though it had become the usual designation of the Apostles (1 Cor. xv. 5 and Rev. xxi. 14), and it would

seem to have been the general opinion of the early Church, in spite of the apparent exception of Barnabas, that there were only twelve who were fully entitled to the name, and that they had no successors.

The question as to the twelfth place and who filled it is not so easy to answer. Was it Matthias or Paul? St. Paul, perhaps in his modesty, seems to settle it in favour of Matthias (1 Cor. xv. 5), though at the particular time to which he refers Matthias had not been chosen; but it is not unreasonable to suppose that John makes St. Paul one of the Twelve in Rev. xxi. 14, and it is certain that he has been placed in that position by tacit election and consent of the universal Church.

4. MATTHIAS

The eleven disciples, as we have seen, took upon themselves to appoint a successor to Judas, and they chose by lot and ordained Matthias. There is no sufficient reason to believe that they were divinely directed and inspired to do this. The illumination of the

Holy Ghost had not yet come upon them. They were probably premature, and Jesus had constantly laid emphasis on the fact that the disciples were His choice and His alone: "Have I not chosen you twelve?" "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John vi. 70, xv. 16; Acts i. 2). And they were undertaking what He had kept in His own power. In fact, the Lord appears to have quietly ignored and set aside that unauthorised election in Jerusalem. He Himself filled up the vacant place in His own wise way, by calling Saul of Tarsus. And the Church has recognised that second and divine choice, and practically disregarded the other. Matthias has dropped out of the thoughts of the Church almost as completely as if he had never been heard of, and St. Paul, the chosen of Christ, has been accepted instead of him.

5. PAUL

Paul had to fight hard for recognition. The other Apostles were somewhat chary of admitting him to their company, partly

because he had been a violent enemy of the faith and they were still suspicious of him, and yet more because they were wedded to custom and precedents. They thought that a man could not be an Apostle unless he had gone through the same drill as themselves—unless he had journeyed with the Master, and received the Master's course of training, and been witness of all the facts. It took them some time to learn that God's thoughts were larger than their own, and that God's electing choice sweeps away all human limitations. This man, who was to become the greatest of them all, was let in, with timidity and hesitation, because they could not keep him out. God forced him in, and the might of the Spirit working through him. Conversions proved his apostleship. His spiritual energy and tongue of fire were his credentials; and his own certainty of his calling made his claims irresistible. He did not wait for the recognition of the other Apostles. He did not even ask for it. If they gave it, so much the better; if they refused it, he would

sweetly defy them and do the Apostle's work notwithstanding. He never budged from the position that he was not in the High Service by their appointment, but by a commission which came straight from heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ. In nearly every one of his epistles he asserts his true position and repudiates all human authority and ordination in some such words as these: "Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead" (Gal. i. 1).

6. HIS EVIDENCE ON THE QUESTION

Evidently St. Paul did not believe in any doctrine of apostolical succession. He did not believe that one Apostle or bishop could transmit the gift to another. He did not believe that the sacred office could be confined to any channel, and given or withheld by those who already enjoyed it. He thought that the wind of the Spirit blew where God listed, and not where human authority determined; and he sometimes indulged in a little

gentle irony at the expense of those who denied his apostleship because he had not been called and appointed in a certain stereotyped way: "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Cor. ix. 2). In truth, his direct calling by Jesus Christ and the virtual setting aside of Matthias upset the theory of apostolical succession at the very beginning.

7. THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

It is very significant that our Lord Himself never gave the least hint to the Apostles that they were empowered to elect others either to apostleship or to any ministerial office. He entrusted them with most important functions, but this was not one of them. They were endowed with miraculous powers, they were charged with the healing of the sick and the casting out of devils; but the right of appointing others to the service or of forbidding their appointment was refused them, and almost jealously

preserved in the Lord's own hands. It was He Himself who appointed and sent out the seventy disciples (Luke x. 1). The Twelve had no part in that. And when on one occasion the Twelve found what they thought an unauthorised person casting out devils in Jesus' name and ventured to forbid him, Jesus at once challenged their action: "Forbid him not" (Luke ix. 49). It was not their business to determine who should or should not undertake the Lord's work. It was as if Jesus had foreseen the claims which would be made in after-time to appoint and forbid, to admit and exclude, and had at the very outset repudiated all such rights. Moreover, the disciples had, on the whole, learned and taken to heart the lesson. If, as we have supposed, they forgot it in their action with regard to Matthias, that was the only mistake of the kind which they made, so far as the inspired records show.

8. GOD'S FREE ELECTION

When the deacons were required to be appointed, the election was not undertaken

by the Apostles, but committed to the whole assembly of believers (Acts vi. 3). And it is worth noticing that the free-working Spirit of God overruled their authority and intention in this matter. They ordained the popularly elected deacons for one limited function—that of administering the poor funds. God inspired these men with higher gifts, and called some of them out to be distinguished evangelists and missionaries. It was as if God was speaking throughout, saying, “I will have no human limitation placed upon the workings of My Spirit. I will send whomsoever and howsoever it pleases Me to send.”

In truth, from that time we find hardly a solitary mention of appointments made by the Eleven to the office of pastor, bishop, or preacher. It is St. Paul who speaks, chiefly in the pastoral epistles, of appointing bishops and deacons by the laying on of hands. And he certainly claimed no right to do this on the ground that he was an Apostle, for he charges his young brothers Timothy and Titus to do the same thing. Most certainly

in his mind the laying on of hands could mean no more than a recognition of fitness. St. Paul was the last person in the world to claim for himself or for others any power of conferring spiritual gifts—any exclusive right to select and appoint men to the ministry of the Word. It would have been running in the face of all that he had contended for in regard to his own apostleship.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that the Apostles did not in any way or degree establish a line of succession or attempt to transmit any of their powers to others. They had no “successors,” as that word is ordinarily understood. They were appointed by our Lord for a special work which would never need to be repeated—to bear witness of what they had seen, especially of the Resurrection, and to lay the foundations of the Church. They were endowed with large and altogether peculiar gifts for this purpose. They were entrusted with miraculous power and enriched with inspired enlightenment. These gifts and powers were not carried forward, and the office was not carried forward. The

office and the gifts terminated with the men when their work was finished.

The real successors of the Apostles—if they may be said to have had any at all—are not the officials, clergy, bishops, and ministers of the Church, by virtue of their office, but these, and equally all non-official Christians, in so far as they have the mind of Christ and bear true witness for Him, and are thus sharers in the zeal, devotion, and elevated purpose of the Twelve.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PRIMACY OF ST. PETER

1. PAPAL CLAIMS

THE Pope sits in St. Peter's chair, and by virtue of his succession to that dignity claims to be the visible head of the Church, the spiritual ruler of Christendom, the vicar of Christ, and the infallible authority on faith and morals. This extraordinary and extravagant assumption, which is the distinctive feature of the Roman Church, would hardly deserve to be treated seriously were it not solemnly accepted by possibly the great majority of the Christian world, and regarded as the bulwark of the faith and the only safeguard against heresy and division. In an unpretentious book like this, it would savour of presumptuous folly and ambitious trifling to attempt anything in the nature

of a general examination of this question—a question which has swollen into huge magnitude, and provoked unlimited discussion from the most able and scholarly minds. The only part of the inquiry which is within the province of the present writer is that which refers back to the testimony of the inspired records. Up to this point we have been building our little structure on the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture and studiously avoiding the untrustworthy sands of ecclesiastical tradition. On that firm ground let it be our purpose to tread now, and to leave untrodden the immense debatable region which attracts bolder minds and rarely repays them for their ventures.

2. NO WARRANT IN SCRIPTURE

And truly one who goes through the New Testament in search of a warrant for the Papal pretensions has a difficult and even impossible task. If he proceeds on the widely accepted theory that St. Peter was the first bishop of Rome, and in that office

claimed and established precedence and superiority over all other bishops, he will find no support whatever in the inspired volume. There is no hint given there that Peter was ever at Rome at all save the one sentence in 1 Pet. v. 13, which has been unwarrantably used for that purpose. It is a perfectly gratuitous assumption to make the Babylon there mentioned a disguised name for Rome. It is true that certain writers of the second and later centuries—Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement, and others—locate Peter in that city and make him co-labourer there with St. Paul. One writer—Hieronymus—goes to the impossible extreme of assigning to him a Roman episcopacy of twenty-five years. Yet if these two Apostles had been associated in work for any long time in Rome, Paul's complete silence on the matter in the epistles written from that city would be almost unaccountable. It may be somewhat easier to believe that Peter took up the work in Rome after Paul's martyrdom, though he would then have reached a comparatively advanced age, and

had but a brief period of service left before his own dying witness had to be rendered. At the best his sojourn and labours there can never be more than problematical, and the testimony of the Fathers and tradition is seriously weakened, if not vitiated, by the fact that the wish gave weight and credence to the thought. The gradual but persistent growth in the authority which was claimed by and given to the Roman bishop made it in the highest degree desirable and even essential to trace back that authority to St. Peter as the first occupant of the office.

3. DISPROVED BY THE KNOWN CHARACTER OF PETER

But putting this historical problem aside, it is far more to the purpose to inquire whether Peter was the kind of man to venture on such pretensions as his reputed successors attribute to him. Was he at all likely to indulge in that sort of superiority of which the Old Testament Joseph in his foolish young days dreamed? Is it possible even to imagine the

Peter of the Gospel story assuming something like autocratic governance over his apostolic brethren, and well-nigh expecting sun, moon, and stars to bow down to him? The incongruity of it is a fantastic unreality, and the thought of this good and true and generally modest man claiming infallibility has more than a touch of the ludicrous. It was the real Peter who wrote, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Such words would hardly have suited the lips of the imaginary ecclesiastical Peter.

We have seen the man in the course of these studies. We have followed him through all his early experiences, and even into those days which came after he had received the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost. We know him moderately well, and have been able to estimate, we trust with some measure of correctness, his mind and character; and with the memory of his sayings and doings fresh in mind, it is amusing to think of him as the first Pope and the supreme arbiter with regard

to the disputed doctrines and practices of the Church. He has passed before us a singular combination of strength and weakness, venturesome and fearful by turns, distinctly brave on occasions, and developing at length into consistent and rock-like courage. We have admired his almost child-like frankness and transparent honesty, his emotional fervour and impassioned devotion to the Master. But he is always the impetuous man whose actions go in advance of his judgment—just the sort of man to lead a forlorn hope, but not the sort of man to devise a plan of campaign and general an army. He is thoroughly human in his fallibility. The account which is given of him is largely a record of well-meaning and pardonable blunders, and these blunders do not altogether cease in those later times when the great spiritual illumination had come upon them all. To the last, so far as we can follow him, he was more fitted for action than for trustworthy leadership, and needing rather the guidance of wiser and more far-seeing minds than able to supply such guidance; and no

member of the apostolic company made larger demands on the grace which deals gently with them that err and is kind to those who fall. Between such a man and the traditional St. Peter of the Vatican and the Romish Church, there is a wide gulf fixed which no theory of development can fill up or pious imagination bridge over. The Peter with whom we are acquainted knew his own limitations. Few men have known them better. He was always ingenuous and humble enough to confess them; and if he had heard, by some prophetic anticipations, the astounding claims which would be made in his name, we can almost imagine him saying, in the language of Hazael, "What! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

4. AND BY HIS PLACE AND POSITION IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

If we proceed from the character of the man to the place and position which he occupies in the early records of the Church, we find the same total lack of evidence in

support of the Papal theory. The Peter of the Acts of the Apostles is in no sense the authoritative and guiding mind in the evolution and extension of the divine society, always excepting its early stages in Jerusalem. His boldness and promptness had secured for him the front place among the disciples in the days of their training, and that place he retained for some time among the company of believers in the holy city. He is prominent in the pentecostal preaching and the foremost figure in the scenes which followed Pentecost. As the acknowledged leader of the community he is specially marked out for persecution and imprisonment. His fearlessness is a pillar of strength to the more timid brethren, and in well-remembered cases of severe church discipline he takes upon himself a certain measure of authority. In the baptism and admission to the Church of the Gentile Cornelius we find his initiative recognised and his voice and influence still potent; but from that time comparatively little is heard of him, and when he does appear he seems to have passed from the first to a secondary

place. Even in the church of Jerusalem other men have become pillars and partially superseded him, notably James the Lord's brother, who had evidently gained a commanding position in the Church, chiefly by virtue of his relationship to Jesus, but also no doubt by his force of character. On the question which arose concerning the circumcision of the Gentile converts, it is James and not Peter who presides over the conference and pronounces the final decision (Acts xv. 13). And we may infer from St. Paul's statement in Gal. ii. 12 that Peter was a little afraid of James, and almost too ready to yield to him. In the matter referred to there—the withdrawal of Peter from communion with the Gentiles—the Apostle is far from assuming the position of primate. It is St. Paul who rebukes and commands, and Peter who quietly and gracefully submits. He has made a mistake, and honestly acknowledges it, which was infinitely to his credit, but not quite indicative of the coming Pope. In fact, in no respect does he continue to hold the premier-ship of the advancing and widening Church.

In Jerusalem he is spoken of for some time as *one* of the pillars, but certainly not the most imposing; and there is every reason to believe that he presently retired from his position there to wider fields of service. In the missionary extensions of the Church he plays a still less primary part. Both the initiative and the vigorous prosecution of the work in foreign fields are undertaken by other hands. St. Paul is virtually the acknowledged leader and almost the bishop of the Gentile churches; and only in one recorded instance—that of the Church at Corinth—is there found a party which sets Peter's authority higher than his own. In truth, he had neither the ambition nor the intellectual qualities which aspire to commanding posts and win them and continue to hold them. He had not the grasp and range of mind which are required for the organisation and direction of an ever-expanding community, and he had not the originality which projects great new enterprises. He was simply a good, true, courageous, lovable, and in the outcome a thoroughly lowly minded

and self-withdrawing man; and that other man which the Romish Church has made of him is a caricature and a figment of tradition.

5. OUR LORD'S WORDS MISUSED

But we must not omit, in dealing with the Scriptural aspect of this question, to make brief mention of those much-debated words of our Lord, which have been everlastingly quoted and misconstrued, in support of the Papal theory, and which indeed have been made the foundation of the entire Papal superstructure. Our Lord, it is contended, established once for all the primacy and supremacy of Peter when He changed his name from Simon to a word which means a rock, and solemnly declared, "Upon this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." We may fearlessly acknowledge

that these strong words would go a long way towards establishing the Romish position, if we were obliged to accept them with dry literalism as a scientific or mathematical statement, and with no appreciation of the Saviour's deeper meaning and purpose in using them. The Latin mind is often a slave to the letter, and does not understand the world of intense and impassioned figures in which the Eastern mind and the very mind of our Lord habitually moved. Even Protestant disputants have often convicted themselves of the same inability, when they have taken the words as mechanically true, but contended that the rock was not Peter, but the confession of Christ's divinity which he had just made. It is surely a needless assumption and almost a palpable quibble. Our Lord *was* speaking of Peter, and in words of magnificent confidence and prophetic intensity, which purposely said more than they meant, was seeking to assure that disciple, and through him the other disciples, of the confidence which He had in them, and the change which His truth and their

belief in His divinity would produce in them. They had all shown signs of irresolution and wavering, and the intention of Jesus was to re-establish and confirm them, and give them to understand that He could do all things with them. This particular man, who was such a strange alloy, clay and iron, with soft yielding veins running through stronger fibre and tissue, was to be hardened into rock; and the mind which had so often lacked clear and wise judgment was to be so illumined and inspired that it would be almost fit to bind and loose and determine who were members of the kingdom of heaven. It was Christ's ideal for this man—an ideal which was never quite attained during his earthly warfare, but to which he approximated; for he assuredly developed rapidly in the direction which the Lord indicated.

Jesus did, in fact, make Peter and the rest rock-like witnesses, unyielding as granite, against which all the hostile forces of earth and hell raged in vain. And it was upon the mighty, unflinching faith of these men, and the rock-like endurance which He had

given to them, that the Church of all the ages grew.

It was surely with a similar purpose and meaning that our Lord spoke those later words to Peter, which seemed to commit to him especially the charge of watching over the great Shepherd's flock: "Feed My lambs" and "Feed My sheep." These words also, like those above discussed, have been greedily seized and appropriated to the aggrandisement of the Papal office. Yet it is only by a want of imagination and sweet reasonableness that they could be used in such a way. We need only to recall the connection and the scene of their utterance to understand that, so far from being intended to confer upon the disciple some unique and extraordinary official dignity, their purpose was to restore Peter to the place which he had forfeited in his own esteem and, as he feared, in the Master's trust. He was still reeling from the shock of his recent fall, trembling and ashamed, with the confidence in himself and his calling bruised and shaken, and uncertain whether

the Master would still recognise him as a disciple and thoroughly believe in him. And Jesus with infinite tenderness reassured him with these words, which expressed the most absolute confidence in the man, and lifted him up to a higher place than that from which he had fallen. The grace of the fashion of it was perfect, and to see in the words only a dry official appointment to a post of vast ecclesiastical authority is to miss all their divine sweetness and beauty.

6. ALL THE DISCIPLES EXALTED WITH PETER

Moreover, if it be contended that by these utterances our Lord purposed to confer upon Peter a distinct and incomparable pre-eminence in the apostolic circle, the answer is simple and manifest: that to the other disciples Jesus spoke words not unlike those which He addressed to this one man—words which promised them equal authority, mastery, and spiritual insight. To all of them He said, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins

ye retain, they are retained." To all of them He promised a kingdom, and that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And to all of them He said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind or loose on earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven." There was no real distinction made between one disciple and the rest. And in no case would these words bear to be interpreted literally. They were sublime figures. They were expressions of unlimited confidence in the men whom He had chosen, and in His own ability to fill them with the spirit of wisdom, power, and grace; and they were intended always, not to exalt these men either in office or their own esteem, but to inspire them with a profound belief in their calling and mission and in the Master who had sent them forth.

And if Peter received more emphatic assurances than the rest, it was not to give him undue exaltation, but because the Lord, "who knew what was in man," knew that he needed these assurances even more than the rest.

The man who is peculiarly prone to err and fall needs greater encouragement and even greater promises to strengthen him against himself and save his faith in the day of trial. Peter would understand what the Lord meant, if Peter's reputed successors have foolishly mistaken the meaning.

CHAPTER XX

THE APOSTLE BORN OUT OF DUE TIME

1. REASONS FOR INCLUDING PAUL

IN a study of the Twelve Apostles the reader will scarcely expect a chapter devoted to St. Paul. It is not customary. It may be regarded as somewhat out of place, and what is of more moment, the weight and influence of the man himself call for separate treatment, and cannot be even superficially discussed in the closing pages of a book. When we speak of "the Twelve," whatever that expression came to mean afterwards, we generally have in mind the chosen band who accompanied the Lord in His ministry. In that limited sense Jesus Himself and the evangelists used the words "these twelve," and they naturally form a study by themselves. On the other hand, the apostolic

company was not really completed until the risen Christ set His seal upon one who had almost certainly not known Him in the flesh, and to quote St. Paul's own word forcibly "apprehended" him for the great service. The question whether Saul of Tarsus or Matthias was divinely intended to fill the gap in the ranks of the Twelve, and nominally complete the number, has been already briefly touched, and it may be left an open question; but there can be no doubt that St. Paul was deliberately set apart by the Lord Himself to round off the circle of His chosen witnesses, and add immeasurably to the efficiency of their work. And it is quite impossible to think of "the glorious company of the Apostles" without placing this man among them, and giving him well-nigh the foremost position.

2. HIS OWN EMPHATIC CLAIM TO APOSTLESHIP

He himself never allowed his apostleship to be challenged without solemnly and strenuously reasserting it. Sometimes in

his extreme modesty, and in the humbling recollection of his former enmity to Christ, he confessed that he was the least of the Apostles, and not worthy to be called an Apostle; but when any doubt was thrown upon his calling there was always the answer of a noble dignity and an assured confidence ready. Am not I an Apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? I was not a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you with all patience." He speaks of himself as the one who was born out of due time, chosen after all the rest—the last to come in, yet one with the rest. And we who know what he did—"in labours more abundant than they all"—are in a position to add that the one born out of due time was born to exercise a spiritual potency greater than that of the others, and that in him the Master's word was fulfilled, "It shall come to pass, that the first shall be last, and the last first." In that late-comer, *then* all unknown and unexpected, the oft-recurring dispute of the disciples was finally

settled, "Which of them should be the greatest."

3. THE PRE-EMINENT FITNESS OF THE MAN

Saul of Tarsus was pre-eminently designed and fitted by birth, education, and earlier experiences to fill a peculiar place in the extension and upbuilding of the Church, and even in the interpretation of the Master's thoughts and purpose. If he had not been privileged, with the men of Galilee, to company with Him during the memorable three years, there were other respects in which he had a distinct advantage over them. The disability that he had not known Jesus after the flesh, if that may be assumed, had its compensation in other ways. The original disciples were compelled to grow slowly into the revelation of His divine fulness and beauty. To them the divine Man was hidden in the man of Nazareth. They could not easily discern the Son of God in one whom they had known as the son of a carpenter. There was a slowness to believe, created by

the very fact of their familiarity. He who was manifest in the flesh was also darkly veiled by the flesh, and for a long time their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. Indeed, it is impossible for us to determine at what particular stage they passed from their partial blindness to the fuller light, and their Master became to them in the fullest sense the vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world and the divine Saviour of humanity.

St. Paul, on the other hand, had never seen Him veiled in the flesh. He was not required to grope his way through preconceptions and prejudices to a slowly maturing revelation. He learned with all the suddenness of a surprising and blinding vision what his fellow Apostles had learned with dull, reluctant, and hesitating receptivity. The divinity of the Lord came upon him almost as the dawning of a glorious summer morning after the deep darkness of the night, and he was able to grasp moreover the larger, deeper meaning of the Saviour's death and resurrection with a quickness and breadth

of apprehension which had not been given to the rest. The spiritual significance of Calvary and of the empty sepulchre was read more promptly, if not more intelligently, by one who, with a richly inspired mind, looked at these things from afar, than by those who had seen them with all their disguising surroundings; and it is to St. Paul that we owe the fullest exposition of these great facts and mysteries.

4. BY BIRTHPLACE AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS

It should also be noted that Paul, by virtue of his birthplace and political relationships, was better prepared than the men of Galilee to take a wide view of the Saviour's mission and aims. He knew more of the world, and especially of the Gentile part of it. The provincialism and narrow patriotism of the Palestinean Jew were enlarged and transformed in him into a broader outlook on men which had a touch in it of the cosmopolitan. If he belonged to the straitest sect of the

Pharisees, he was also a Roman citizen—a privilege which he never forgot, and of which he never ceased to be proud. He knew something, perhaps much, of the mighty Roman Empire and its varied and scattered peoples. He understood its power, and felt the throbbings of its moral, social, and political life. He had more sympathy with the foreigner than the localised and stay-at-home Israelite could have; and all this predisposed him to a conception of Jesus as the light and life of all men and the coming Master of the world. It was the Roman and cosmopolitan element in him as well as the Christian that pleaded for the throwing down of all barriers between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, and the levelling up of Greek, Roman, and Jew into one new-made man in Christ. It was this same element as well as the Master's appointment that predestined him to be the Apostle and missionary of the Gentiles. In fact, as we have seen, it was he, with his clearer and more far-seeing eyes, who pointed the other Apostles to that larger world which

they might have failed to enter if he had not led and almost forced the way.

5. HIS SINGULAR CALLING AND CONVERSION

We need further to remember that the singularity of his calling and conversion had much to do with the peculiar cogency of his witness, and his profound belief in the Saviour's irresistible power. The Twelve had been brought under the power of Christ and spiritually renewed through half unconscious stages and degrees. They had never realised in any one decisive moment the conquering sweep of His spiritual mastery. Paul had been laid hold of, brought low, and carried away captive in spite of himself. Almost in a moment, by a supernatural awakening, his eyes had been opened to see in the face of the man he hated, the face of his supreme Master and God. He had been lifted into the new life by a force mightier than a whirlwind and more astounding than a chariot of fire. In the very instant when he was furiously raging against

the Nazarene, with the hot fever of battle burning in his veins, the warrior had been stricken, thrown down, utterly subdued, and made the willing slave of the power which he was defying and smiting. His prejudices, passions, haughtiness, and antagonisms were slain by a vision of the Crucified One, and as by the sword of His mouth. This very fact, and the constant remembrance of it, armed and imbued him with perhaps a mightier confidence in the weapons of his warfare and the resistless sweep of the Saviour's kingdom than even the other Apostles enjoyed. The Christ who had so sweetly and wonderfully forced him into submission—humbled, convinced, and regenerated his stubborn will—would surely be able to bring every human thought into captivity and obedience. It was with the ever-present proof of his own overthrow and subjugation that he spoke of the pulling down of strongholds and the casting down of imaginations and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. He found in his own experience a prediction and

assurance that "He must reign until He hath put all things under His feet." He foresaw the time when every other name should be abased, that the one Name might be exalted—when every knee would bow at that Name and every tongue confess Him Lord—and he had a vision of the whole Christian host sweeping on like a triumphal procession from victory unto victory. In fact, it is always from St. Paul's pen that we get the most glorious anticipations of Christ's complete and universal ascendancy. And the genesis of this mighty certainty, which gave extraordinary force to his ministry, was mainly in his own miraculous conversion. Everything was possible to the grace which had levelled his pride to the dust and changed the most obdurate enemy into the most impassioned lover and devoted slave.

6. HIS WIDER CULTURE

In yet one other feature St. Paul stands out from his fellow Apostles, and in a certain sense is lifted above them. He had, with

perhaps the single exception of St. John, a greater share of mental endowments and natural gifts, and without any exception he was the best educated and intellectually equipped of the group. He was the only one to whom the word "cultured" could be applied with any measure of appropriateness, and he had a considerable store of that worldly wisdom of which he makes such slight account. Indeed, he alone had the right to weigh the wisdom of this world in spiritual scales and find it wanting, for he was not destitute of it. If the other Apostles had ventured on this line of reasoning, they would have been accused of disparaging what they did not possess and could not understand. In calling the comparatively ignorant and unlearned men of Galilee, Jesus had sufficiently proved that He was not dependent on the equipment of the schools, that He could shape the rudest instruments into the most efficient weapons of His warfare, and that He was able to impart to very babes the divine things which were hidden from the wise and prudent. But

having done this, He called the last of the Apostles from a higher intellectual stratum, as if to vindicate the place of mental gifts, genius, and scholarship in the Church, and to prove that He intended the highest human endowments to be sanctified and consecrated to His service. Saul of Tarsus was, like the Israelites, "brought out of bondage with silver and gold," or, in other words, with manifold mental treasures, which he poured out like costly ointment at the Master's feet. He was a learned man according to the standard of that day. He was thoroughly replete with the knowledge which the Jewish synagogue prized as well as that wider knowledge which was given in Roman schools. He had studied rhetoric, logic, and what we call generally "the humanities." He was acquainted more or less widely with Greek and Roman literature and religions. He was a master of words, an argumentative and persuasive orator, and richly gifted with poetic imagination. He had the mind which can marshal facts—systematise, organise, and reduce to practice great thoughts and

principles; and he was a fairly accomplished linguist, speaking fluently no doubt Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin, Greek, and perhaps other tongues. It was this last acquirement which speeded his feet on his missionary journeys, and laid open to him the Gentile world.

7. HIS INFLUENCE IN THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

Yet all his endowments contributed in a measure to that end, and helped to give him a preponderant voice and influence in the Apostolic Church, and it may be added in the Church of all ages. As an interpreter of Christ and Christian doctrine he stands now, as he has always stood, unrivalled. For more than eighteen hundred years this man has been showing Christ to the world as Christ appeared to him; and though the tendency of the present age is to turn from his epistles to the gospel records, he still holds his ground as the greatest expounder of the incarnate mystery and the facts of redemption; and his words, next to the Saviour's own words, have been and still are the dearest treasures of

the Christian heart. To him largely we owe the forms and organisations which Church life and Christian fellowship assumed and developed. From him we get the most complete and conclusive array of proofs which we possess of the resurrection of our Lord. It is he who has emphasised most powerfully the great Christian motives and expounded with the most extraordinary force and beauty the highest elements of Christian morality; and it may be said, without exaggeration, that from the age of the Apostles until now his epistles have furnished an inexhaustible storehouse for the Christian theologian. However diverse the schools of theology, they have all drawn largely and well-nigh equally from the well-spring which his inspiration opened. And most of the great religious movements and reformations in the Church have been at least suggested, mainly, by the prayerful study of his writings. Indeed, the weight of this man in Christian history cannot be estimated. It is impossible to imagine what shapes Christian history would have taken if he had been left out; but certainly the story of the

Church would have run on quite different and perhaps less noble and expansive lines. No one can ever seriously question the peerlessness of his position in the apostolic company. Christ, who magnified His grace and proved His matchless wisdom in the calling of the rest, magnified His grace and showed His divine foresight most of all in making this last and crowning addition to the number; and to write of the Twelve Apostles without mention of this man might be technically correct, but it would be, from every other point of view, lacking in perspective and the sense of proportion, and indeed absurd.

CHAPTER XXI

BARNABAS, THE MISSIONARY APOSTLE

1. PIONEER OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

THERE is yet one other figure over and above the original Twelve who passes before us in the sacred records as an Apostle of our Lord. It is open to question whether the name was not also given to certain less known personages—to wit, Silas Andronicus and Junias—and those who are interested in the matter will find it ably discussed in Lightfoot *On the Epistle to the Galatians*. But there is no doubt concerning Barnabas, the companion of St. Paul in his missionary labours. St. Luke bestows the title of Apostle equally upon the two (Acts xiv. 14); and St. Paul, in at least two places, describes Barnabas as his fellow Apostle (Gal. ii. 9 and 1 Cor. ix. 5, 6). He was called to the office, not as the rest were,

by the direct summons and commission of the Lord, but by the election of the church at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 22), and by the subsequent confirmation and appointment of certain prophets and teachers at Antioch, acting under the express guidance of the Holy Ghost (Acts xiii. 2-4); and he played a part in the early extension of the Gospel which proved that he was worthy to fill the office, and which gave him a somewhat noteworthy part in the inspired story.

According to Clement of Alexandria, Barnabas possessed one of the distinctive qualifications of the apostolate, in that he had seen the Lord Christ and followed Him during His earthly ministry. For that writer asserts that he was one of the seventy disciples whom Jesus sent forth. But that may be only one of the many current traditions which Clement accepted and reported with little attempt to verify them. There is no hint of this previous discipleship in the New Testament pages. There he appears for the first time in Acts iv. 36; and if we were to judge only from the mention made of him

there, we should undoubtedly infer that he was made a disciple and came into the Church on that great flood-tide of fervour and conversion which began with the day of Pentecost. He was one of the comparatively few men of substance, if not of wealth, whom the Church of the first days drew into its service, and he is referred to as a conspicuous example of those who endowed the little community with all their goods. Like the earlier disciples he gave up everything at the higher command, and like his missionary companion suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ. St. Paul afterwards makes significant mention of the fact that this man, who had willingly impoverished himself in the interests of the Church, was found labouring with his own hands to support himself on his missionary journeys. He had one other feature in common with the greater Apostle, in that they were both Jews of foreign birth. Barnabas hailed from the island of Cyprus, and like him of Tarsus had been in close contact, perhaps the greater part of his life, with the Gentile world. That

fact no doubt had its weight in the thoughts and motives which made him an Apostle to the Gentiles.

It is in that character, and as the man who shared with Paul the glory and the peril of the pioneering work which opened the larger world to Christ, that we always think of him. He has been in a measure eclipsed, or at least overshadowed, by his more distinguished colleague and fellow-soldier. That is not surprising. Paul was much the greater man of the two in intellectual power and perhaps force of character. With Paul the fine moral and spiritual qualities were united with the gifted mind, the eloquent tongue, the originating genius, and the boundless energy which belong to the makers of history. Such men inevitably go to the front and win the leading place in the world's regards. In the Acts of the Apostles, when the two men are spoken of together, Barnabas is placed first. That was evidently the position assigned to him by those who sent them forth. The Church had not then discovered which was the greater

man. But the course of events proved it, and Barnabas quietly fell back into the second place, and ere long was allowed to drop out of the story. Yet he probably deserves a much higher place than has been given to him; and if we could call up his true figure, we should possibly think as dearly of him as we do of Paul.

They are equally memorable, at least, in this—that they were the first men to grasp the full extent of Christ's saving purpose, and the first to venture forth into the unknown wastes of heathendom to claim the whole world for the Master. The beginning of that mighty enterprise and the epoch-making thought which suggested it were enough of themselves to give these men names which can never be forgotten. And it is not too much to say that Barnabas led the way, for the thought had its origin in his mind before it laid hold of the man who embodied it in his wider and grander labours. We are almost reminded of Luther and Melancthon. The less-known man had the first vision of the thing that needed to

be done, and the man of greater energy worked out the vision into act. To Barnabas the light came first, and what we may describe as "the imperial call." For we read that when the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Gentiles at Antioch had believed in Jesus and received the Holy Ghost, Barnabas was sent as the fittest man to confirm and continue the good work. And then follows this most suggestive item: he "departed to Tarsus, for to seek Saul" (Acts xi. 25). He knew his man. He had seen the coming missionary in that recently converted Pharisee and persecutor. It was he who brought this great soldier into active service, and showed him the fields where he was mainly to carry on his warfare. And when he had secured Saul, and the two instruments were ready, then the church at Antioch turned its eyes to the regions beyond and sent out its messengers. Then follows the graphic and often thrilling account of the journeys which they took together, winning at great cost the testimony which was given of them: "Men that have hazarded their lives for the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In fact, all the interest of the story henceforth centres in them and their perils and their bold ventures and successes until the time of their separation comes.

2. THE MAN OF GOODNESS

To us Barnabas will always be known as the eager and enthusiastic missionary; yet it was hardly in that character that he seems to have made the deepest impression on the early Church. The men who had most to do with him knew him as one of the noblest examples of whole-hearted and attractive Christian goodness. It was perhaps because he perfectly exemplified the finer graces of the Christian life that the Church sent him as its representative to the Gentiles. He had no particular gift of speech, as we are expressly told, but his whole bearing was so Christ-like and winning that it gave him wonderful power as a witness for God. Preeminently suggestive is the very name by which he is known to us—Barnabas, “son

of comfort.” The disciples gave him that name because his heart and life were brimming over with kindly thoughts, generous impulses, and helpful love. He was a man whose self-forgetting and noble spirit was free from every tinge of envy and jealousy, as his whole relationship with Paul proves, and he must have been full of that forbearing, long-suffering, all-forgiving charity of which St. Paul wrote so grandly. It was that which made him take the side of the sinner in the dispute which eventually parted the two men. John Mark, their young colleague, had turned coward and deserted them on one of their dangerous journeys, and Paul would have no more of him. Barnabas clung to him, and wished to give him another trial, and the two went off together to Cyprus; and Paul went his way alone. It is useless to discuss the merits of the dispute, whether Paul was too severe or Barnabas too yielding. We do not know enough of the circumstances to judge. But, at least, we see the man of tender heart—pitiful, forgiving, and wonderfully kind—“the son of comfort.” Perhaps

he saved this young man for the service of the Church and for the great literary work which he accomplished on its behalf.

The writer of the Acts of the Apostles briefly, but very beautifully, sums up the character of Barnabas in the expressive words: "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." And then an item full of meaning follows—where he went "much people was added to the Lord."

His goodness was his persuasive power, and he was not unworthy to be enrolled in "the glorious company of the Apostles."

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUDING LESSONS

THE story of the disciples, so far as their story has been written at all, was intended mainly to serve as a background for the great Figure of the Gospels, and to help us to the understanding of the Master. But we may well believe that the Author and Source of all inspiration had a secondary purpose in this recital—namely, the encouragement and edification of all who should hereafter believe. The experience and training of these men furnish a living and speaking picture of the discipline which the divine Teacher proposes for all men, and a prediction of what any man may become, in the main essentials, who submits himself to the same mastery. It needs no preacher to point that moral. The sermon

and application are on the surface of the records which we have been studying.

1. THE DISCIPLES THE NUCLEUS OF AN INNUMERABLE COMPANY

Our Lord chose twelve disciples that He might make them the nucleus of an innumerable company. They were as seed which was to bring forth of its own kind, to multiply and replenish the earth. Ever and anon during His ministry He gave the name "disciple" to others who were not of the Twelve. He gave it, in fact, to all who inclined their hearts to His teachings, and were ready to obey Him; and in one of His parting injunctions He commanded the Eleven to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. xxviii. 19). Indeed, that was the aspect in which all believers were regarded in the early Church. In the Acts of the Apostles especially, but also in the Epistles, the name "disciple" is repeatedly given to believers, and the practice thus established has even come down to the present time.

Our Lord's thought was that all His followers should begin as disciples, and pass on as the Twelve did to the higher stage of apostleship—that is, that in their own degree they should all first learn of Him, yield to His transforming touch, and then bear their witness. In them, therefore, is a pattern or model which all Christian growth may be expected to follow. We are all to be shaped in the same mould, and to receive out of His fulness as they received. All that the Master was to them He offers to be to us, and every line of their story is thus fruitful in inspiring suggestions and comforting thoughts for the least as well as the greatest in the kingdom of God.

2. THE POSSIBILITIES OF FAITH

First, it is impossible to be in the company of these men and trace their development from the beginning without realising in a greater degree the possibilities of faith, and the capabilities of common human nature when it passes under the divine control.

These men help a man to believe that, however little of the image of God he has now, he may be shaped into that image; and they almost incite him to that noble boast of St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." From the lives of these men there comes a voice like that which Ezekiel heard when he was lying with his face to the ground, afraid of and despising himself: "Stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee." For they tell us that nothing is common which Christ undertakes to cleanse, nothing mean when He has enriched it with His grace, and that no man should dare to belittle himself whom Christ is willing to use.

Our whole study of the Apostles has confirmed the estimate of them which we summarised in a preliminary chapter. When the Lord commenced their education, they were what we vulgarly call "common men." Perhaps it would be more respectful to call them "average men." If they had any exceptional qualifications for the service, only the Master's keen discernment could discover them—our

own ordinary eyes search for them in vain. There was nothing great in them which we can see until He made them great. They might have said to us, as they would have said had opportunity been given, what Paul and Barnabas said: "We are men of like passions with you: no stronger, no fitter, no more promising—perhaps even far less promising—than some of you." And at the end of their preparation they would all have said, again with St. Paul, "By the grace of God, I am what I am."

3. THE COMPLETENESS OF THEIR SURRENDER TO JESUS

If there was an exceptional feature which distinguishes them from the ordinary Christian, it was in the completeness of their surrender to Him, and the whole-hearted obedience which they felt constrained to render. They entered as little children the kingdom which He opened for them, following with implicit trust into the land towards which He was leading them, and like Abraham not knowing

whither they were going. It was their yielding to the spiritual sway of Christ that made these men great. They gave up to Him their will, mind, energies, and affections. They laid all that they were and had in submission at His feet, and He filled all that they gave Him with His own divine sweetness and power, as an earthen vessel might be filled with gold; and then He gave it back to them, magnified and glorified, to be used in His service. They gave Him faith, trust, and obedience, and He did the rest. And thus He showed to us and to all men what mighty use He could make of souls that were not mighty, if they were really willing to be used, and put themselves under His shaping hand. Where these conditions are satisfied, there still goes on the making of Apostles.

4. THE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR PERSONAL INTERCOURSE

It may be argued that they had the immense advantage of coming under His

personal sway and growing into His likeness as they drank in His words, beheld His face, and saw the grace of His actions. Far be it from us to underrate that privilege, yet let it not be forgotten that it was after He was gone, and they saw Him no more, that their most remarkable transformation took place. The spell of His unseen presence was more powerful than His visible touch had been. They understood His words when He had ceased to speak them; they saw His glory when He had vanished out of their sight; and it was not until then that the full shining of the light appeared in their faces. Indeed, the last chosen and mightiest of the Apostles, so far as we know, had never seen Him at all during His earthly ministry; yet that man, St. Paul, was not a whit behind the rest in the wonderful transfiguration which the Master wrought in him.

From all this we learn that His visible presence is not indispensable to the training of apostolic souls. We may rather say that the Christ who trained the Twelve has been always training disciples, and is doing it now.

The school is always open and the Master always at His work. He is never tired of dealing with dull scholars and repeating His lessons, and He has just as much power as ever to make strong and noble lives out of ordinary and even mean material.

5. THEIR MASTER IS OUR MASTER

Further, it is necessary to lay emphasis on the truth that the Master who comes before us in the story of the disciples is the very same Master with whom we have to deal. And the records of His intercourse with them are most illumining in that aspect. In studying these men we have been indirectly reading the Master's mind. For nowhere does He open it out more freely than in His daily talks with them; and nowhere does He appear more winsome, wise, and divinely long-suffering than in His treatment of these wayward, foolish, and oft-provoking scholars. The whole of it is a revelation passing strange and exceeding lovely. His affectionate clinging to them was most wonderful. It was

love at first sight, and it remained constant, unwavering, holdfast, stronger than death. Having loved His own, He loved them to the end. To our judgment there was nothing in them at the beginning or afterwards which deserved such love. Yet He had joy in them as His peculiar treasure. He looked upon them as His Father's gifts to Him, and rejoiced over them with singing. He guarded them as the apple of the eye. His prayers for them had all the passion and urgency of tears and blood-drops; and when one of them, Judas, was lost, it was as if something had broken in His heart. Well might one of them write in the long after days, "We love Him because He first loved us."

And out of this love came the patience and forbearance which made the charm of His teaching and handling of them. It might have been said of Him throughout, "As a mother comforteth her children, so will I comfort you." It was a revelation of God's Motherhood as well as of the divine Fatherhood. Mother-like He gathered them under

His wings and protected them. And mother-like He pitied their weaknesses, forgave their follies, passed by all their ignorant blunders, encouraged all their honest attempts, and sweetly chided and corrected their failings. Seventy times seven did they grieve and wound Him, and He did not even tell them of the hurt, but answered it with the same infinite kindness and perfect trust. He was slow to anger and of great mercy. His lessons were unwearyingly repeated. He believed in them; and "He that believeth shall not make haste." It was line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, until the work was done. They might truthfully have said with the Psalmist, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." And one who had taken in deeply the Master's mind did say, "I beseech you by the gentleness of Jesus Christ." Surely it is this gentleness which is the comfort and reliance of all Christ's disciples to-day, and we see it at its very best when we are in the company of the Twelve, with their Master and our Master in the midst.

6. CAREFUL STUDY OF THE MASTER STILL
INDISPENSABLE

There is one thing more which is brought home to us in our walks with these disciples, and as we watch the gradual enlightenment and expansion of their minds. We are made to feel that a careful and long-continued study of the Master is indispensable for those who would do the work of the Master, and no less necessary to the attainment of a richly developed and many-sided Christian life. It is often said, with far too little qualification, that the disciples of our Lord were uneducated men. It has often been urged as an excuse for lack of training and even in proof of the superiority of illiterate preaching, and not seldom has self-conceited ignorance strutted about in the clothes of the Apostles, mistaking vanity for spiritual power, and boasting as if the absence of culture were the surest passport to divine illumination. Yet when the disciples are spoken of as uneducated men, that word must only be allowed in its

technical and very limited sense. They had certainly little of the education which is reached through books, professed teachers, and ordinary schools. They were ignorant of college drill. But in that deeper and more searching education which develops the mental and spiritual faculties, which helps a man to understand life and use it wisely, and brings out all that is best in him, they had large and even exceptional experience. They passed through the best school that has ever been opened, and they grew under the teaching of the greatest Master whom the world has known or will know. For three years He drilled them with a patient, watchful discipline as severe as it was gentle, and always exacting, though uniformly tender and forbearing. Nothing escaped His notice. Their secret thoughts were hardly hidden from Him, and their every word and action was scanned and criticised by the eyes of a jealous love which sought only to correct them into perfect goodness and wisdom. He taught them to speak with discretion and think with honesty. He taught them through His

parables to be keen observers of men and to read the moral lessons which were hidden in all common things. He gave them a profounder knowledge of themselves than the most erudite philosophy could have taught, and He made them understand human nature and the world of men in a way that no schools have ever accomplished. Dormant forces were awakened at His touch, and gifts of intelligence were born and nourished into strength as He breathed into them His life and its inspirations. Indeed, they were privileged to have that highest education which only comes through the sway of a mind-shaping and master spirit. For then, as always, it is not the school and its lessons, but the man who gains love's commanding mastery over us, that forms and transforms our natures into what they become.

7. EQUIPMENT FOR CHRIST'S WORK

And truly no man is thoroughly equipped to work in Christ's field until he has placed himself under that mastery and spent some

time in the same school. Young and fervent Christians, hot with the zeal of the fresh, new life, are often impatient of the drill. They are eager to talk of Christ before He has talked to them, and to bear witness for Him before they have learned any of His choicer lessons. They are ambitious to be preachers, missionaries, and Apostles without going through the preliminary school of disciples. They think they can do without study, and that even the study of the Master can be dispensed with; and they forget that to sit with Mary at His feet, and hear His words, is sometimes more the one thing needful than to bustle about with Martha in active service. Yet it is rarely these impatient ones who continue steadfastly in well-doing, or whose well-doing is of the most wholesome and serviceable kind. The impatience which leaps over discipleship has not often staying power enough for the severer strain of apostleship, and one who has not drunk in slowly the Master's mind will be little fitted for the slower toil and strenuous endeavour to which the Master calls him.

Good work can only be done by prepared instruments. The vessels must be made meet for the Master's use. And whatever other qualifications may be dispensed with, it is always necessary at least to understand His mind, to have a thorough knowledge of all He said and did, and to walk much in His company, studying His every attitude and expression, as did the twelve men whom He was to send forth.

8. CHRISTIAN LIFE RIPENED BY PATIENT DISCIPLESHIP

And this is no less true of those whose Christian calling is, not to bear witness of Him in more public ways, but just to show Him in their simple daily lives. The average Christian fails to attain the higher reaches of the Christian life because he fails in the initial stage. He never learns to be a disciple. St. Peter understood the matter, by sweet and dearly bought experience, when he spoke of "growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ," as if

the two things were necessarily combined and conditioned one by the other, and when he commended the building up on the foundation of faith, knowledge, and out of them all those Christian virtues in which the Master was pre-eminent.

Our Christian lives are meagre and often one-sided, developed in patches rather than as a whole—not because we are slower to learn than the disciples were (for that would hardly be possible), but because we are less willing to learn, because we shrink from the time and toil which it would involve, and perhaps most of all because we do not realise as they did our urgent need of the Master's teaching.

Yet to have walked with these men, and to have seen in the course of our studies how they grew out of weakness into strength and out of moral deformity into spiritual beauty, must have forced upon us the conviction that Christ-like character and fulness of power to serve are still made and given in the way along which He led them by the continual watching of the divine model, by

the daily listening to His words, and by returning often to His feet, as they did, to tell Him of all that we have seen and heard, said and felt. And if this book should stimulate a few readers to a more careful and constant study of the Great Teacher, and help to give them a little of the true disciple's mind, it will have served its purpose, and perhaps will not have been written wholly in vain.

Works by Dr. Alexander Maclaren

WEEK-DAY EVENING ADDRESSES.

Delivered in Manchester.

Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

THE PSALMS.

(Vol. I., Second Edition. Vol. II., Fifth Edition. Vol. III., Fifth Edition.)

Crown 8vo, cloth. 7s. 6d. each.

THE EPISTLES TO THE COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON.

Eleventh Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 7s. 6d.

THE LIFE OF DAVID AS REFLECTED IN HIS PSALMS.

Ninth Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 3s. 6d.

MUSIC FOR THE SOUL—DAILY READINGS FOR A YEAR.

From the Writings of the Rev. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D. Selected and arranged by the Rev. GEORGE COATES.

Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

BIBLE-CLASS EXPOSITIONS—STUDIES ON SELECTED PASSAGES.

Crown 8vo, cloth. 3s. 6d. each Volume.

1. The Gospel of St. Matthew. 2 Volumes.
2. The Gospel of St. Mark.
3. The Gospel of St. Luke.
4. The Gospel of St. John.
5. The Acts of the Apostles.

“Dr. Alexander Maclaren’s ‘Bible-Class Expositions’ are marked by the characteristic clearness and force of their author’s best work. . . . The work of an expositor who possesses in a marked degree spiritual insight and power of skilled expression.”—*Record*.

LONDON : HODDER & STOUGHTON, 27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Works by Dr. Alexander Maclaren.

LAST SHEAVES.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

"The volume reveals on every page the hand of the master. The simple, yet perfect analysis of the text, the exquisite phrasing, the glowing spiritual passion, the tender and personal appeal, are all here."—*Daily News*.

AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

Crown 8vo, cloth. Second Edition. 5s.

THE VICTOR'S CROWNS, AND OTHER SERMONS.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

TRIUMPHANT CERTAINTIES.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

CHRIST IN THE HEART, AND OTHER SERMONS.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

A YEAR'S MINISTRY.

First Series (Sixth Edition). Second Series (Sixth Edition).
Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s. each.

SERMONS PREACHED IN MANCHESTER

First Series (Tenth Edition).
Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

SERMONS PREACHED IN MANCHESTER.

Second Series (Ninth Edition).
Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

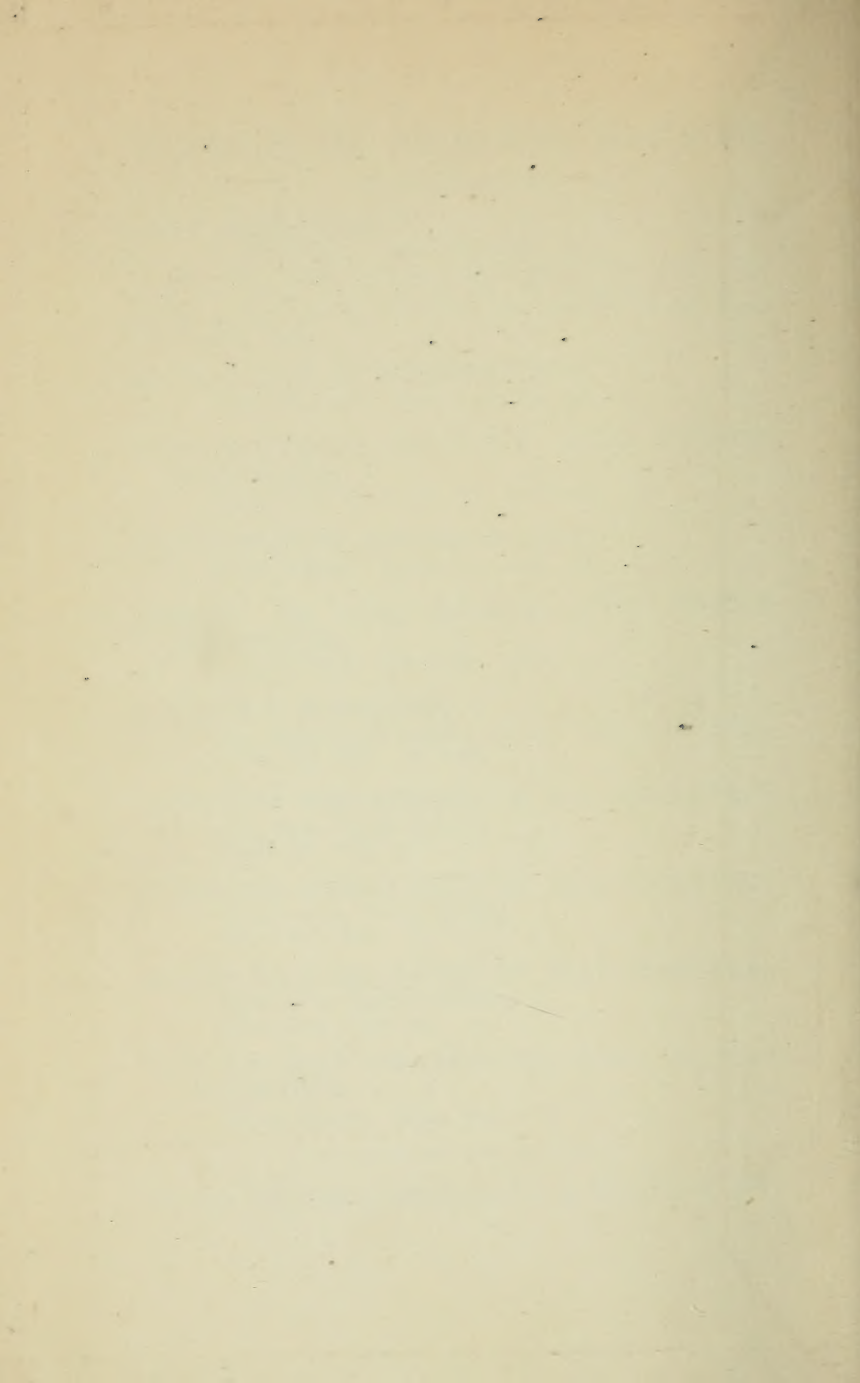
SERMONS PREACHED IN MANCHESTER.

Third Series (Eighth Edition).
Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

THE SECRET OF POWER, AND OTHER SERMONS.

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth. 5s.

LONDON : HODDER & STOUGHTON, 27, PATERNOSTER ROW.



PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

H&SS
A
2789

UTL AT DOWNSVIEW



D RANGE BAY SHLF POS ITEM C
39 09 09 02 019 3